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TRB

from Rome
November 30, 1974

One World

The marble blocks lie in the moonlight like white bones and I try to imagine what they were like when they were columns in the Roman Forum. From that marble bench Cicero may have risen to denounce Cataline. Senators moved to seats on the right to vote yes, and to the left, no. They literally "took sides." The orator spoke from the rostrum, so named for the rams, or rostra, taken as trophies from enemy warships and fastened on the platform. The great stones lie there, testifying that empires decline and fall.

Now the world shrinks again, back to the one world that Rome conquered and controlled. The World Food Conference just held here dramatized this. There are about four billion people on earth, half of them hungry and maybe (though estimates differ) 460,000 malnourished or actually starving. Can the world survive, half famished and half fed? That is the question that confronted the delegates from 130 nations, rich and poor. As of October 15, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, there was a world grain shortage of between seven million and 10 million tons. Most of those who will suffer are in South Asia and sub-Sahara Africa.

I made discoveries at this conference. One was that "population" is a naughty word, like "sex" to certain Victorians. The Chinese delegate, the Russian delegate and the Pope all condemned population control. Yet at the present rate the earth's population will double in 35 years, with the growth of food already out-paced. "The conference is absolutely schizophrenic," said observer Grant Cotram of the University of Wisconsin. "Delegates have pushed population into the corner, yet it is the absolute determinant of the food crisis."

Another thing I learned is the way a lot of small countries dislike us. We so want to be loved. Why don't they love us? Well in Caesar's time did the Gauls love Rome? The US has six percent of the world's population but uses 40 percent of its resources. Can such an imperial discrepancy last? Things move faster now. Someday all the legions will come home. Look at those stones.

Little nations like Yemen and Upper Volta regard us askance. After all, when half the world was hungry, imperial America paid farmers not to grow food. We slaughtered calves the other day too. This is no new thing. What is new is that the United States is now for the first time itself aware of it.

Then there is the matter of trade. We and the other rich members of our club set the terms of world prices: for every ton of rubber, or sisal or tea that it took in the '50s and '60s to buy a tractor from us, it now takes two tons. When we complain the Arabs fix the price of oil, the have-not nations slap their sides with laughter. They would like to do the same thing. Has Washington any plan if there is another embargo? From here there seems to be no energy plan: indeed is there any government at all in Washington? How about the payment of petro-dollars? The sum is huge. Can anybody visualize $60 billion? That is about the total amount of all American holdings abroad, built up over the years. And that is also the amount the oil cartel will ask from the world *in just one year*. It will probably soon be $100 billion. A friend with the World Bank tells me, "It can't be paid." When I ask what he means, he shrugs.

The dollar has been sinking in terms of gold, and we are preparing a self-inflicted wound of letting individuals buy gold again on January 1. Some expect a "run," not against banks, but against money itself.

The highlight of the food conference was the unexpected attack by Secretary Butz on Sens. Humphrey, McGovern and Clark of his delegation before a startled press conference on the next-to-the-last day. The delegation had cabled President Ford for authority to promise more aid, and Butz himself signed the telegram, under pressure. Finally came the negative reply from the President. No, the delegation could not commit the US to a million-ton increase in emergency famine relief.

Humphrey had pleaded eloquently, making his case publicly and privately, but, I thought, within the bounds of propriety and courtesy. Butz's thin, pinched face, as he repeated "three Democratic senators" in a kind of refrain before about 200 reporters and spectators, made him look like the self-righteous farmer with a pitchfork in the picture "American Gothic" by Grant Wood. By inference he charged the senators with denigrating their country in foreign parts. Further they had put compassion before a balanced budget. Did they not know that the increase they proposed "would have a bullish effect on the market"?

And so Earl Butz presented the gut issue more dramatically than anyone had thought possible: what sacrifice will America make for starving people?

One can sympathize in a way with Secretary Butz. America's record of food-giving is generous. As Humphrey told me, many critics of the US do not have clean hands, they have not fed their own people. Local left-wing claques at press conferences here followed the radical chic line, seeming to imply that last summer's US drought was a CIA plot. It was all too much for Earl Butz whose one solution is the market economy.

I know one thing: there is no problem, no matter how complex, that does not have a solution that is cheap, simple and wrong. That is true of the market economy and of world hunger.

Looking back on all this, I think the food conference did a good job in centering attention on the immediate emergency. But the longer problem remains —how to feed a swelling population on a small planet with finite resources. America cannot continue much longer as world food bank, as it has for 25 years; the problem is too big. Social revolutions are required right back in the poor countries themselves to free the small farmer and the landless, loin-clothed laborer. Television won't stop showing us the emaciated child with birdcage ribs and the mother too listless to brush away the flies.

Time to leave the forum now. Time to grab a Fiat taxi, surefooted as a cat, that scampers over cobbled Roman roads whose very manhole covers show the imperial letters "SPQR." What price grandeur? The white blocks ask that in the moonlight.

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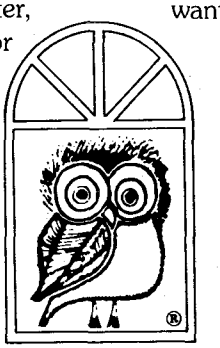

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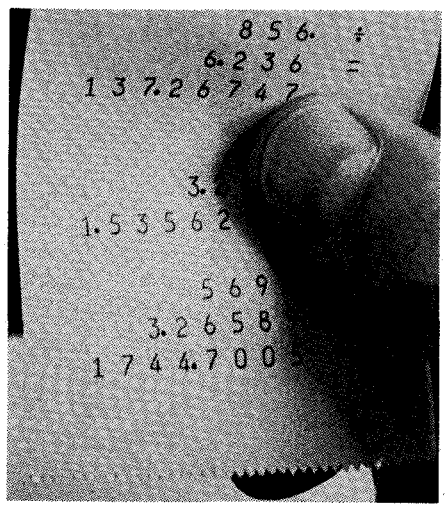

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Contents

7-11 Comment
When You Turn on the Tap, Uncomic Snoopy, Watergate (Cont.), Shanghai Gesture

12 Bon Chemical Appétit—*Colman McCarthy*

15 Practicing the Arts: A Special 60th Anniversary Supplement—*Daniel Aaron, Edmund Wilson Letters, Woody Allen, Jan Kott, John Updike, Norman Mailer, Maxine Kumin, Daniel Robbins, Stanley Kauffmann, Richard Tillinghast, Ned Rorem, Lillian Hellman*

40 Books—Reviews by *Malcolm Cowley, Jonathan Yardley, Louis D. Rubin, Jr., Adam Hochschild*

46 Fine Print—*Doris Grumbach*

48 Correspondence

The Staff

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When You Turn on the Tap

Between TRB's report from Rome on hunger and Colman McCarthy's surrealist account in this issue of what the chemists are offering our insides, the reader may conclude that enough has been said for one week about what humans are or are not being fed. Alas there's more to be told, and it concerns what long ago, in Greece of the fifth century BC, was thought by Pindar to be "the best of all things"—water. Like so much else, it isn't what it used to be.

We are learning painfully that the most promising innovations carry penalties, and some of these penalties lie undiscovered until years after the new machinery has been approved, sold and bolted into place. For instance anti-pollution devices are intended to reduce the amount of SO_2 gas expelled into the atmosphere, but now the experts must study the filters to find out whether the sulfuric acid *they* emit is more dangerous than what they were meant to remove. The latest hazard discovered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is that drinking city water may be bad for us. Preliminary studies made by several scientists at different locations this year seem to indicate that the process of chlorination increases the number of cancer-causing elements in the water and exposes city dwellers to a risk not present in the countryside. The discovery has come as something of a shock, and the EPA plans to make an immediate survey of major water systems to find out whether early suspicions are justified.

Recent publicity about drinking water has centered on the findings of Dr. Robert Harris of the Environmental Defense Fund and Dr. Talbot Page of Resources for the Future. Using data mostly collected by others, Dr. Harris put together a report for a New Orleans councilman demonstrating that the city's water contains chemicals that have been shown to cause cancer in animals, and that people who are served by city water have a statistically greater chance of dying of cancer than Louisianans who drink well water. This report was not a venture into unexplored territory. On the contrary, Harris says, it came as a reaction to the indifference of local officials to an earlier study of Mississippi River water. Because residents complained about the bad appearance and taste of New Orleans water and the strange flavor of fish caught in the lower Mississippi, the EPA began taking samples from the public water supply in 1967 and analyzing them. Two years ago the EPA published its final report, identifying

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numerous carcinogenic chemicals it had found. It concluded that these were the source of the "oily-petrochemical odor" and warned that "the trace organics in the Mississippi River drinking water supplies are a potential threat to the health of the 1.5 million people who consume this water," particularly the elderly, the ill and children. The EPA said that filtration with carbon particles might be necessary to clean the water.

City officials ignored the 1972 report, as apparently did the EPA, for nothing much happened until this summer when Harris and Edward Brecher wrote a series of articles on drinking water. In the furor that ensued Harris and the EPA undertook a fresh review of the Louisiana case. Both concluded this month; both confirmed that carcinogens are present in abundance.

So much has been said about health hazards found in the air, food and water—and in the case of tobacco, with so little effect—that people greet the discovery of a new source of danger with a yawn. As an example consider the unfortunate lobbyist who chose the wrong analogy in his press release last month. Ralph Harding, president of the Society of the Plastics Industry, said that makers of polyvinyl chloride were singled out undeservedly as producers of carcinogens: "Many, many articles in common usage involve hazardous materials in the early fabrication stage. We don't stop drinking water because it is purified with chlorine." Warnings about carcinogens may not be taken seriously because we voluntarily consume so many in tobacco smoke that we don't want to think about what may be happening. In addition carcinogens come in such minute doses and take so long to do their damage that we often fail to make the connection between cause and effect. But cancer is on the rise in the US, and Dr. Harris writes that "the rate of increase appears more rapid than either the rate of increase of population or the rate of increase in the total death rate." More Americans die of cancer each year than the number who died in all the battles of World War II. Harris believes that we minimize the risk of the carcinogens around us because we consider the amounts present "too small to be of significance to the general population." He argues that most testing today errs on the side of optimism—detecting only the gross dangers and deemphasizing chemicals that accumulate slowly in small quantities, but with deadly effect. Like the World Health Organization, Harris feels that no level of carcinogen pollution, however small, should be tolerated.

COMING: a report by

Peter Barnes on the future

of Cesar Chavez and the

United Farmworkers

The case against some city water systems looks strong. In addition to the studies mentioned already, several other reports published this year came to the same conclusion. J. J. Rook, of the water treatment systems in Rotterdam, reported that heavy chlorination of dirty water produced chemicals in his lab like those being found in American water systems. An EPA researcher working in Cincinnati came upon a similar discovery. T. A. Bellar was trying to develop a process for isolating volatile chemicals in water when he realized that his tap water was loaded with the stuff he wanted to identify. He went out and took samples of water at six points in a Cincinnati treatment plant and found that the concentration of these chemicals increased in stages as the water underwent successive doses of chlorine. (It isn't chlorine itself that's dangerous, but the chemicals that chlorine produces when it interacts with other compounds in the water. No one is suggesting that chlorination be stopped.) The finished product, tap water, has roughly 10 times as much chloroform (a carcinogen), for example, as the raw water being fed into the plant. And this month Dr. John Laseter, chairman of the University of Louisiana biology department, announced that he'd found the same carcinogenic compounds in the blood plasma of New Orleans residents that had been identified in the water system. He says he has "eliminated air as the principal source and tied it down to the municipal water supply."

As Dr. Harris sees it, the difficulty stems from the fact that our 20th-century water plants are designed to fight the 19th-century problem of waterborne bacterial disease, which they do fairly well. One doesn't hear about typhoid any more. But there's little testing to check for 20th-century pollution by metals (lead, mercury, chromium), and there are no standards limiting pollution by such organic chemicals as chloroform and carbon tetrachloride—both of which can be found in city water systems today. People have complained for years about the bad smell and taste of tap water, and health officials have reassured them that nothing was wrong. That may change. The Congress appears ready to give the EPA authority to set standards for drinking water throughout the country and to run tests on organic pollutants. Both the House and Senate have passed legislation, and now the differences must be worked out. EPA now has had power to regulate only "interstate" drinking water—the kind carried on buses and airplanes.

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Uncomic Snoopy

It may be years before we know the extent of domestic spying and undercover skirmishing that went on during the Vietnam era, but the government has at last begun to expose the truth. After months of quibbling over details, two agencies last week conceded that what had long ago been reported in the press was so—special teams were organized in the last decade to scrutinize and confound critics of the government. In a report to the Attorney General, a Justice Department committee describes a top-secret "cointelpro" system (a contraction of the bureaucratese "counter intelligence program") aimed at home-grown radicals. Created on the order of late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, the scheme called for FBI agents to apply a little preventive medicine as they watched over suspect political groups and foreigners. Among those who received special attention were black student activists and certain anti-Vietnam war organizers. Agents furnished derogatory information about members of target groups to "friendly" journalists for publication, mailed letters on forged stationery to disrupt relationships within the groups, posed as group leaders, issued false instructions and helped employers and credit bureaus identify people who had engaged in "illegal, immoral, radical and Communist Party activities." In 15 years of meddling, the cointelpro system acted on 2337 proposals and produced "known results" in 516 instances. The Justice Department review team concludes that while the "great bulk" of these interventions was "legitimate and proper," there were about 20 actions that "can only be considered abhorrent in a free society."

While the FBI was cleaning out its dusty closets, the Internal Revenue Service made public 41 memos describing what *it* had been up to with its Special Services Staff, set up to check the tax returns of political activists. The memos were forced into the open by one of Ralph Nader's satellite foundations, the Tax Reform and Research Group, which filed suit against the IRS under the Freedom of Information Act this summer, having failed to obtain the memos after formally requesting them beginning in October 1973. The memos show that shortly after receiving instructions from the White House in 1969 to "move against leftist organizations," the IRS ordered a staff of clerks to gather up tax returns of those considered to be "ideological, militant, subversive and radical. . . ." (The IRS maintains that it acted on its own, without prodding from the White House.) Among the 99 "radical" organizations whose names have been released (thousands are still secret), there are several surprises. Can the IRS have thought the foundations of the republic were threatened by the National Urban League or Americans for Democratic Action? And what lunatic could have imagined there was something potentially subversive about the National Council of Churches of Christ or the Police Malpractice Complaint Center? These names were thrown casually into a pot that included the American Nazi party, the Black Panthers and the Communist party.

Under the pressure of bad publicity, the IRS decided to abolish its Special Services Staff in August 1973. In its brief existence, however, the SSS office had amassed files on 3000 groups and 8000 individuals. The files are still intact upon request of the Senate Watergate committee. A Nader associate says that the purpose of the SSS was "patently not tax-related, but political." The evidence of that is in the tax liability data it produced. Ordinarily auditors find additional tax liabilities in 60 to 70 percent of the returns they set aside for close examination. (In 1974 it was 70 percent.) But the special agents examining the "radical" returns between 1969 and June of 1972 found new liabilities in only 49 cases out of 9800 set aside, or a discovery rate of one half of one percent. Nader's tax group concludes that the IRS special staff was an intelligence gathering crew.

Both the FBI and the IRS say they've stopped doing what they were doing. But the FBI director, Clarence Kelley, has not said it won't happen again. Even as his superior, the Attorney General, released the report on Hoover's cointelpro scheme and called it "not something which we in a free society should condone," Kelley handed newsmen a somewhat different story. Hoover's program, he said, "helped bring about a favorable change," and he envisioned a time when it might be used again.

Watergate (Cont.)

The Watergate trial has slipped off many front pages, but it's still going on. John Dean has pleaded guilty to his participation in the cover-up, been sentenced and is serving time. Haldeman, Ehrlichman and former Attorney General John Mitchell, along with Mitchell aide Robert Mardian and Nixon committee lawyer Kenneth Parkinson, face possible jail sentences if convicted. The former President and 19 others are unindicted co-conspirators.

White House tapes played by government prosecutors at the trial show that still another cover-up took place after April 30, 1973. The initial cover-up aimed to conceal the involvement of—and thus protect from criminal prosecution—White House aides and Nixon campaign officials such as Mitchell and his deputy Jeb Stuart Magruder who planned, directed and funded the Watergate bugging and burglary. Now we know that a *second* cover-up was designed to hide Mr. Nixon's knowledge and participation in the *first* cover-up.

On January 8, 1973 White House aide Charles Colson met with Mr. Nixon in the latter's Executive Office

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Building office. In their conversation Mr. Nixon showed extensive knowledge of Howard Hunt's situation, the injury suffered by Hunt's daughter and Hunt's close friendship with columnist William Buckley. The former President suggests that public sympathy could be generated through a Buckley column about Hunt which in turn would make executive clemency for Hunt "a simple case," in Mr. Nixon's words. The purpose of clemency—to keep Hunt quiet on Watergate and other matters—is clearly understood by Mr. Nixon and Colson. "Well," says Colson, "the others [Watergate defendants] aren't going to get the same . . . The vulnerabilities are different." Why? Because Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy, who Nixon and Colson agree will remain silent, had direct information on meetings, discussions "very incriminating to us," says Colson.

In December 1973 and January 1974, Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski went to the White House and listened to tapes of January 1973 conversations between the former President and Colson, none of which contained the passages quoted above. Even after the prosecutor's office subpoenaed this tape, White House officials, particularly J. Fred Buzhardt, maintained no such conversation had taken place. After Mr. Nixon resigned, the January 8 tape still remained a mystery until it was finally delivered—well after all the others. It is more incriminating of Mr. Nixon than the highly publicized June 23, 1972 tape, release of which supposedly triggered the former President's resignation.

While there may be some doubt about a White House cover-up of the January 8 tape, there can be no such question about incriminating matters deleted from tapes made public last April 30. On that date, in response to pressure from the House Judiciary Committee, Mr. Nixon released the transcripts of 46 conversations. By doing so, Mr. Nixon wanted to make it appear he was exceeding the committee's requests. He said that the transcripts "represent the best efforts accurately to transcribe the material contained on the recording tapes." It was added that "material not relating to the President's conduct has been omitted, except where inclusion is relevant and material as bearing on the President's conduct."

Reporters remembered those criteria as they listened in Judge Sirica's court the other day to the April 14, 1973 conversation among Mr. Nixon and his then aides Haldeman and Ehrlichman. They heard the former President declare in calm, clear tones in reference to Hunt, Liddy and the Cubans, ". . . and before I leave office and they'll get off. You get them full pardons. That's what they have to have John." And Ehrlichman answers "Right." That did not satisfy Mr. Nixon. He goes on to ask, "Do you agree?" To which Ehrlichman replies, "Yep, I sure do."

That exchange was not in the transcript released last April by the White House. In its place was the notation: "material unrelated to presidential actions."

At a later point in the same conversation as heard in court, the former President asks, "Who was it, Tom Pappas they had to see me?" They were discussing raising money for the Watergate defendants and Mr. Nixon says to Haldeman: "You told me to see him [Pappas, a rich Republican donor]. In fact you said he was helping. . . ." The April White House version of that conversation does not include the Pappas reference. It is replaced by: "material unrelated to Presidential action."

Who covered up these passages? How many more are there? Mr. Nixon's chief defense counsel James St. Clair said at the time of the April 1974 release that the former President personally supervised the deletions. Buzhardt, St. Clair and former White House chief of staff Alexander Haig directed this latter cover-up at Mr. Nixon's behest, much as Ehrlichman, Haldeman, Mitchell and Dean acted at an earlier time. While the latter men have been called before the bar of justice, the former have yet to be asked to account for their actions.

Shanghai Gesture

When Secretary of State Kissinger revisits China this week he is likely to raise among other subjects the possibility of a future encounter between President Ford and Mao Tse-tung, similar to the dramatic meeting that brought former President Nixon and the Chinese Communist party chairman together nearly three years ago. Such a voyage would familiarize Mr. Ford with the Chinese leaders, whom he has never met, and, in the game of triangular diplomacy currently being played by the major powers, it would counterbalance his recent excursion to the Soviet Union. But Kissinger and the Chinese agree that a journey by the President to Peking only makes sense if it serves to advance Sino-American relations beyond the present unconventional liaison—and herein lies a complicated problem that has remained unresolved since the historic Nixon trip.

The US and China are equally anxious to move rapidly toward establishing formal diplomatic relations. Mao and Premier Chou En-lai, who are both old and ill, appear to want a firmer link to the US in order to strengthen China's leverage against the Russians, and, in the process, strengthen its international standing. Kissinger is also seeking to tighten the Chinese tie as a way of gaining more maneuverability with the Kremlin. His concern for speed also reflects a fear that the struggle for succession that may follow the deaths of Mao and Chou could thwart his efforts to put the US relationship with China on a steady footing. But progress along these lines continues to be blocked by

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the same obstacle that has stood between the US and China for a quarter-century—Taiwan.

The Chinese refuse to concede to a full-fledged diplomatic bond until the US breaks with the Chiang Kai-shek regime, and, by acknowledging their right to Taiwan, recognizes their sovereignty over all China. Underlying this attitude is their understandable insistence that no nation with which they have official links should be permitted to entertain diplomatic relations with their Chinese rival. Implicit in their position is the demand that the US must nullify its defense treaty with Taiwan, since a province cannot legitimately maintain a pact with a foreign country.

Kissinger is prepared to satisfy the Chinese on this score, but only on condition that they pledge to settle the Taiwan question peacefully, since the Ford administration would face political opposition at home and the US would lose credibility abroad if the defense treaty with Chiang Kai-shek were scrapped without a guarantee by Peking to renounce the use of force against the island. The Chinese reject this request on the grounds that their handling of Taiwan is an internal matter and none of America's business. Kissinger came up with a formula of sorts during the Nixon visit to China in February 1972, but it was a temporary compromise designed to produce the Shanghai Communiqué, which rescued the trip from partial failure.

Work on the first draft of the communiqué actually began during Kissinger's voyage to Peking in October 1971, when he and his Chinese counterparts sketched benign generalities into a document but were unable to reach a meeting of minds on the thorny Taiwan question. It was still a bone of contention by the time Mr. Nixon arrived in China. During that week the Chinese were strenuously trying to persuade Kissinger to confirm in the final version of the communiqué that the US recognized Taiwan to be a province of one China. Only lately have we learned that Dr. Kissinger came close to conceding the point and was restrained at the last minute by Mr. Nixon, who declined unless the Chinese in turn promised not to attempt a recovery of Taiwan by force. The two delegations haggled over that point until five am on February 26, 1972. The pressure on Mr. Nixon to find acceptable language was heightened by the fact that his trip had been publicized as a television spectacular, and he was reluctant to return home empty-handed. Ultimately a unique formula was devised. The two sides agreed to disagree. The Chinese stated their position in the communiqué, affirming that Taiwan "is a province of China" and that its "liberation . . . is China's internal affair in which no other country has the right to interfere." The US, with deliberate vagueness, declared that it "does not challenge . . . that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is part of China," and it called for a "peaceful settlement" of the question by "the Chinese themselves."

The US statement superficially seemed to recognize the Chinese position, and Chinese spokesmen in Peking went to some lengths to emphasize that they had won a major concession. But eventually they would admit that the American passage in the communiqué represented no capitulation to their viewpoint, and in subsequent conversations with visitors Chou En-lai stressed the need to "cut off the tail" of the Shanghai Communiqué—meaning that its fuzziness would have to be clarified. The present Chinese stand is that the US ought to emulate the Japanese, who cemented their ties with Peking by rupturing their relationship with the Chiang Kai-shek regime and reducing their presence on Taiwan to a trade office. Until the US follows that model, the Chinese submit, Sino-American relations will not rise above their current level.

One indication that little progress is being made is that negotiations aimed at settling private American claims against China and unlocking Chinese assets frozen in the US and elsewhere have been moving at a snail's pace for the past couple of years, and there is no visible sign of an agreement in sight. The scientific, technological, cultural, athletic and journalistic exchange program that was supposed to have been broadened under the terms of the Shanghai Communiqué is crawling along at the same sluggish rate, and some of the loudest complaints against the Chinese for hobbling it ironically come from American specialists who, before the Nixon breakthrough to Peking, were grumbling that US efforts to achieve a reconciliation with China were inadequate. Many of these specialists contend that the Chinese virtually control the whole operation, since they select the Chinese who visit the US and carefully screen the Americans who do get to visit China. The Chinese provoked a certain amount of disappointment in the academic community last year, for example, when they cancelled a tour by a group of Harvard scholars in retaliation against an article by Prof. John Fairbank that they considered to be "unfriendly," and soon after they inexplicably denied a visa to a member of a Yale delegation. Not long ago, when they vetoed a member of a delegation of linguists because he had served with the Office of Strategic Services in China during World War II, the entire delegation withdrew. The Chinese finally reversed that decision, but the episode left a sour taste. Similar complaints are heard from businessmen, disenchanted that China trade has not turned out to be as lucrative as they had hoped, and miffed by Chinese bureaucratic methods.

Some experts suggest that the recent Chinese appeal to the Russians for a limited rapprochement was, in part at least, calculated to scare the US into modifying its position on the Taiwan issue. It is also said that Kissinger advised President Ford to meet the Soviet Communist party leader Leonid Brezhnev in Vladi-

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vostok, which is located in territory claimed by China, as a way of scaring Peking into a less intransigent line. The real problem on both sides is largely internal. The Peking leadership cannot compromise on Taiwan without arousing the hostility of Chinese factions that have consistently looked for a pretext to attack the new US relationship. And the Ford administration cannot unilaterally abrogate the US commitment to Taiwan without incurring the wrath of right-wing Republicans, who would accuse it of abandoning the island to the Communists, and liberal Democrats, who would assail the President for violating the rights of the Taiwanese to determine their own status.

A critical element in the current equation that worries both Washington and Peking is the prospect that the government on Taiwan may give up its illusory notion that it represents all of China and declare the independence of the island. Such a step would damage Sino-American relations for years to come. It can only be averted if the US and China elevate their present arrangement to a formal diplomatic link—and that is why Kissinger and the Chinese ought to be mobilizing their best lawyers to invent a durable compromise that overcomes their differences.

I'm Hungry, Take Me To Your Chemist

"Bon Chemical Appétit"

by Colman McCarthy

The glop oozed in the cooking pan in a lava-spread of fakery. Mingled with the sauce, like rocks in creek-bottom muck, were artificial meatballs, a concoction of imitation beef with textured vegetable protein, all of it flavored by a mystery chemical called D515. Next to the pan were toothpicks and napkins, and a slap-happy cook urged you to nibble. The fake meatballs were free, sample munchies from the Bush Boake Allen Company, Norwood, New Jersey. For $600 the company had rented space on the vast floor of the Rivergate Convention Center a few blocks from the French Quarter. Its exhibit booth was one of 290 at the 34th annual meeting in New Orleans this year of the Institute of Food Technologists. These are the fake food artists—the chemists, engineers, researchers, additive mixers and other rabids, offering a vision of a world in which we will be led by the tongue to the brimming lid of an all-chemical blender, when food will come to us not from home kitchens but from Laboratory Central owned by Feed-o-Matic, Inc., from one super vat of test tube potions in which tastes and flavors are measured by stomach-tingle machines. If a stranger comes to the land he will say: I'm hungry, take me to your chemist.

The Institute of Food Technologists will be happy to oblige such a stranger. It presents itself as the saver of the race: "[Our] members are concerned with the advancement and application of new and existing knowledge to the improvement of the food supply for the benefit of mankind." But there's a hearty appetite for profits as well. Stein-Hall tells buyers: "To pile up more sales, look into food modified tapioca for flavor encapsulations." Neotec Instruments calls out: "New technology for food industry profits." Virginia Dare Extract Co. says: "To boost your sales and profits, Vintage Vanilla is the vanilla you need."

Even as they scratch at the scabs carried by consumers from the wounds of high food prices, the fake food artists wage war games against nature. Durkee offers "technology that tops nature." Givaudan, makers of imitation beef, chicken and lobster flavors, has "flavors that nature envies." Glidden Organics—producers of a bloody mary mix using a new tomato oil—comes on saying "our nature is to improve on nature." Norda "takes nature further." It is as though these companies were announcing that the Second Creation has come and in the new Garden of Eden stands a tree from which the Almighty Chemists hang a fake apple. Indeed, in the tradition of proud devils, one firm goes beyond Mother Nature to take on God the Father: Seacor, in ocean kelp, states that "All algins come from the same original manufacturer. Then we go Him one better."

All this would be of little public concern, except that the cries of "Bon Chemical Appétit!" come when increased warnings are being sounded about the health dangers of many American foods. It is no longer just the carrot juice and yogurt groupies who worry,

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but others also, from school nutritionists who don't want their children exposed to government approved and ITT-made Astrofood, to the nation's 104,000 dentists who must yank and fill the teeth rotted by "fun foods." It is not that science and chemicals are dirty words—such a dismissal ignores the many benefits to come from the labs—but that citizens have become an experimental control group. Citizens too busy to keep up with the food industry tend to think of additives—average per capita consumption is five pounds a year—as those long unpronounceable names listed in small print among the can or box labels, but manufacturers' vats contain not only large measures of the tetrasodium pyrophosphates or sodium carbosymethycelluloses (two of the 32 additives allowed by law in ice cream, 50 percent of which can be air), but also such common additives as salt or sugar. In Lipton's Cup-a-Soup line, for example, its expensive chicken noodle soup has more salt than dehydrated chicken. Health authorities keep warning that excessive salt intake is involved in such threats to human life as high blood pressure, obesity, heart disease and tooth decay. Even for those who are willing to take their chances with additives and fakery, the busyness of the technologists means something else: we have raised a whole generation on fake foods, made possible by chemicals bolstering fat, water and carbohydrates, and void of vitamins, proteins and minerals. Children are more familiar with Cool Whip than cooled fruit, Corn Diggers instead of freshly dug vegetables. Senate hearings on television revealed that 70 percent of all the TV advertising directed at children is for sweets or snacks. Parents who dare serve their teenagers a real potato risk being told that it "tastes funny." As indeed it does, with palates dulled by the cuisine at roadside joints: Americans consume 30 pounds of frozen french fries, a rise of 460 percent since 1960. In the same period, consumption of fresh vegetables dropped seven percent.

In 1971 snack food sales alone totaled $3.4 billion, with a six percent annual growth rate. In the shopping aisles, citizens see the newest product—such as Egg Beaters, the fake eggs from Fleischmann's which cost about 50 percent more than hen's eggs, or Pringles, the reconstituted potato chip packaged saddle shape for nearly two dollars per pound. The competition to reach the aisles is fierce. In 1969, 9450 items were introduced into supermarkets but less than 20 percent fulfilled the sales goals of their producers. That represents a lot of flops, meaning that pressure is on the chemists not to refine old foods but to create new ones. Once a god in the lab is finished creating a "food," others in the company will decide what to charge the public, keeping in mind that the price of the successful items must also carry the cost of the failures. A vice president of research and product development at Libby, McNeil & Libby wrote for the IFT magazine on the "corporate view of new product development." It "is important to understand that a product cannot be expected to be a winner forever. It will most certainly suffer declines for any number of reasons. A good management realizes this and is prepared to constantly introduce new products or modified products which will be capable of generating new profit dollars for the firm at the time when those older products are beginning to suffer profit declines." On whether the public actually needs any of the new products the technologists feverishly create, the man from Libby was candid: "The implicit assumption behind any new product development program is that there is a consumer need in the marketplace which must be filled, and that the company which is successful in developing a product or service to satisfy that need will enjoy success in the marketplace. However, today's consumers really don't *need* anything in the way of new products, but they are constantly searching for something just a little bit better or different . . . If a marketing man looks at [the] product spectrum and asks if there is any way to add another kind of orange juice product to the segmented market and make a profit on it, the immediate temptation is to ask, 'who needs it?'" Rather than being put off by that question, "a company could come along with an orange juice product to which additional color or sweetness has been added, or to which an important nutritional component has been added and do well with it in the marketplace."

The last is exactly what many food companies have been doing. Just when the public is learning that much of its food is nutritionally worthless, products are now being "fortified." The alert manufacturer has it both ways. In the past he made nutritional bilge—flavor and color added—but now he adds vitamins to persuade shoppers that the bilge is good for them. Thus Kool-Aid is now fortified, as are Hostess Twinkies. The vitamins serve as cheap sales come-ons; they turn foods into vitamin pills that do nothing to counteract the potential damage of high levels of sugar, fat and salt. As for the economics of food fortification, Michael Jacobson of Washington's Center for Science in the Public Interest and author of *Nutrition Scoreboard* examined the methods of General Mills. "It makes both Wheaties and Total. They are identical except that Total is fortified with one-third cents worth more vitamins. That one-third cents becomes twenty cents at the supermarket. It's cheaper to buy Wheaties and a multi-vitamin than to buy Total."

Jacobson, an MIT Ph.D. in microbiology, is well known to the food technologists. For the past three years he has been showing up at their annual meetings to award his Bon Vivant Vichyssoise Memorial Prize. The award is a garbage can. In 1973 the winner was General Mills for such trashcan foods as Kaboom, Sir Grapefellow, Baron von Redberry and Franken Berry, all cereals containing between 30 and 50 percent

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sugar. Jacobson called them more candy than cereal. This year's Bon Vivant garbage can went to Gerber's, the baby food company. "When you talk to food technologists," Jacobson says, "everyone points the finger at the other guy. Oh yes, sugar is a problem but our candy is only a minor part of anyone's diet; we don't intend it to replace real food. Our Jell-O is intended to be eaten in moderation. Soda pop, yes, contains sugar but no one eats enough soda to ingest too much sugar. Every segment of the industry disclaims responsibility. Yet, the fact is, that several hundred thousand Americans are dying prematurely every year because of the food they eat. . . . The food industry puts the blame on the American public, saying that it consists of nutritional fools. Yet, on the other hand, the industry says of its so-called pleasure foods that it is only giving the public what it wants. Are the leaders of the industry saying that they are being led around by fools? . . . If the public wants something that industry scientists know contributes to a bad diet and to some of our most serious illnesses, should industry try to sell as much of it as fast as it can?"

Jacobson is not the only critic of the food technologists. Even its own members are having gut feelings. Prof. George F. Stewart, who won an award from the IFT this year for his "pre-eminence in and contributions to the field of food technology" told a reporter at the 1973 convention in Miami Beach that he was depressed by the bizarre sights among the exhibit booths. "I worry about it. I think it's awful. I don't know where it's taking us. There's a lot of stuff being put on the market that's not food." Some critics, aware of the Department of Agriculture's estimate that only 50 percent of American family diets are good—down 10 percent from the previous decade—are beginning to see the irony of a nation surrounded by food but looking for ways, says Dr. D. Mark Hegsted of Harvard's School of Public Health, to "avoid malnutrition." Hegsted, speaking recently before a group of food editors in Dallas, felt that "30 percent of the products in grocery stores today could be thrown out and nobody would be the worse."

Nobody but the technologists, that is. Of the 356 papers presented at the IFT convention in New Orleans, not one came from an independent consumer or representative of a consumer group, even though such groups—stomach defense leagues—now thrive in all areas of the country; only a few papers touched on issues of food safety or nutrition. Instead of consumers being present, the papers were given either by food company technologists, university professors—many of them getting consultant money from industry—or governmental officials from agencies like the FDA or USDA. In 1969 the House intergovernmental relations subcommittee disclosed that of 49 upper level FDA officials who had lately resigned or retired, 37 joined or served as consultants to companies they had just been regulating.

The special alarm of the fake food convention is not only that so many firms annually assemble to display their newest samples of worthlessness but that the technologists appear to work in isolation from the real world. The same week the Institute of Food Technologists was meeting, food news pressed in. Canada banned all beef from the US because our meat is chemicalized with DES. In Washington the Consumer Protection Agency bill was being opposed by such powers as the Grocery Manufacturers of America and the National Association of Food Chains. Another bill, seeking to remedy the 40 percent of all US food plants found to be filthy, was also opposed by parts of the food industry. At the FDA a petition was rejected calling for warning labels on packaged foods that do not list all ingredients—a measure designed to alert millions of citizens with allergies, high cholesterol levels, dietary problems and certain religious beliefs as to what's in it for them.

Instead of offering leadership that might help solve such problems, the technologists mostly inhale the ether of their own cleverness, in a trance over such new products as fake cheese, xanthum gum and counterfeit chocolate. It is as if they take seriously what Mark Twain said, that the "secret success in life is to eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside." But that statement came along before the IFT was monkeying with the food supply. Evidence suggests that the food is indeed fighting it out inside of us, except that what is being defeated in internal battles is not other foods but the eater's blood, muscles and bones.

We are beginning to learn that diet and disease are more closely related than previously recognized. Occasionally dramatic examples come forth, such as the astonishing physical fitness of the two Japanese soldiers who recently emerged from jungle hiding since 1945. Both had perfect teeth, testimony not only to their sugarless diets but also that dental health is entirely possible without Crest or Listerine. The health lesson of the soldiers was an old one: disease is best avoided by a sound diet that can resist bacterial invasion rather than by depending on drugs after the invasion.

Until the facts become conclusive—research suggests, but has yet to prove, that fatty and refined foods have helped make cancer of the colon and rectum the second most common cancer—all of us are part of the food scientists' control group. One of these years, bored by creating new foods, they will go to their annual meeting and announce a new disease, saying "last year you couldn't die from this." An exhibit booth, perhaps between the fake meatballs and the imitation watermelon flavorings, will display a corpse—floating in chemicals from Stouffers, embalmed with Cool Whip, and ITT Wonder Bread stuffed in its mouth to prevent the hollow look.

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PRACTICING THE ARTS

A Special 60th Anniversary Supplement

Some Unpublished Letters of Edmund Wilson

Edmund Wilson (1895-1972)—critic, poet, playwright, historian and one of America's foremost men of letters—figured significantly in the history of The New Republic, *although it's hard to pin down the details of his affiliation with the magazine. We do know, however, that he was brought in by Walter Lippmann. The "great news" Wilson announced to Stanley Dell (a Princeton classmate and close friend) in 1921 seems to have been premature since it wasn't until November 1926 that he formally joined the paper's editorial board as an associate editor though he had already published a good deal in the magazine in the preceding years. After 1930 he became a contributing editor, and from then until 1941 he appeared intermittently in its pages. Wilson broke with* The New Republic *early in 1941, convinced that the owners had converted it into a propaganda organ for the British; Wilson, of course, was pacifist in his sympathies and the magazine favored aid to those at war with the Axis.*

While associated with the paper, Wilson wrote some of his most vigorous and original pieces and gave a distinction to the literary section unmatched by any other American weekly. Apparently the editors, when they took him on, expected him to represent the much discussed "Younger Generation," and Wilson—who in the '20s was shuttling between Greenwich Village and the respectable circle of The New Republic*—felt the pull of divided loyalties. He shared his Bohemian friends' distaste for the stodgy, but unlike a good many of the literary malcontents and expatriates, he looked for a "renascence" once the country had sloughed off the cultural consequences of commercialism and industrialism. He entered the swim full of ambition to do something for the literary credit of America.*

But even before the onset of the Depression, Wilson read a portentous social meaning in the trial and execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. Not long after he was deep in socialist history and had distanced himself from the progressive generalizations that Herbert Croly (1869-1930), founder of The New Republic, *had expounded in his influential book,* The Promise of American Life *(1909). The letter to George Soule working out terms for publishing installments of* To the Finland Station *(which appeared in book form six years later) reveals his political inclinations in 1934 as well as his businesslike dealings with editors. "To write what you are interested in writing," he once wrote, "and to succeed in getting editors to pay for it, is a feat that may require pretty close calculation and a good deal of ingenuity."*

Wilson saw eye to eye with only a few of his fellow New Republicans, but, as he said, he appreciated the freedom and the pay. Working for the paper may not have been an ideal arrangement for a man of letters desperately seeking time to write his own books, yet it was during The New Republic *years that he firmly established himself as a powerful literary force.*

Daniel Aaron

Daniel Aaron *is chairman of the committee on higher degrees in the history of American civilization and professor of English and American literature at Harvard. His last book is* The Unwritten War: American Writers and the Civil War *published in 1973 by Knopf.*

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To Stanley Dell

Feb. 19, 1921
New York

Dear Stan:
The great news is that I am going on *The New Republic* Monday—as Managing Editor. They offer me more money, more chance to write than I get here and the prospect of becoming a regular editor some day. Lippmann got them to take me on. They are really in quite a bad way. The magazine has become so dull that the editors themselves say they are unable to read it and the subscribers are dying off like flies. The editors, who started out as gay young free thinkers, have become respectable to the point of stodginess. Lippmann is the livest of the lot. They are also very much at odds with each other. Each one has taken me aside and told me confidentially that the rest of the staff were timid old maids. They are taking me on because they think that the magazine needs younger men. (Merz has gone abroad; they seem to hold it against him that he acquired the *New Republic* manner so completely as to be indistinguishable from the others and have warned me solemnly that I mustn't get to write like Herbert Croly)—I have had a very amusing time lately being entertained by each one of the editors in turn. It is like being taken into Bones or The Masons or something. I find all the editors (except Littell, whom I haven't met yet) curiously unattractive people,—though some of them are genuinely learned and some of them are really clever. I dined last night with the Lippmanns and the Ordway Teads and was so depressed by the extreme conventionality and respectability of these eminent intellectuals that, after I left them, I fled to the Village and assisted at the latter phases of an ignoble studio party, where a mixed and ribald company were doing a little serious drinking. Really, nothing more correct could be imagined than the home-life of the Lippmanns,—and, when I tell you that the Lippmanns regard the Crolys as old-fashioned and dull, you will be able to form some idea of what your poor old friend Dr. Wilson is going to be in for till July 1st, when I shall take ship for the Old Country.

—It is all very interesting, nonetheless, and an excellent opportunity. When you become a regular editor of the *N.R.*, you draw a large salary and never go near the office, but stay at home and write books. You can't lose, because the magazine is endowed. I'm going to do dramatic reviews and literary stuff. Read *The New Republic.*

—Do let me hear from you at length. I'm glad to see that you're writing. You have never sent me the article about superfluous information. Why don't you?

—Well, I must stop, as I have to go out in a minute with Crownie, for what he describes as 'a last supper.' —I am editing the MS. of Fitz's new novel and, though I thought it was rather silly at first, I find it developing a genuine emotional power which he has scarcely displayed before. I haven't finished it yet, though, so can't tell definitely. It is all about him and Zelda.

Yours always,
E.W.

• • •

March 4, 1921
The New Republic

Dear Stan:
It was Mencken I sent the story to and Nathan, when he talked to me about it, said that Mencken liked it,—so I don't think they can have seen it before. I am awfully glad they took it.—I wish you would send me

Notes on Names Mentioned in Letters

Walter Lippmann's (1889-) association with *TNR* lasted from its founding in 1914 until 1921. Charles Merz (1893-), editor and essayist, joined the paper in 1915. Whether he returned to *TNR* after his trip to Europe in 1921 we can't say. Ordway Tead (1891-1973) was an educator, author and editor. Alvin Johnson (1874-1971) contributed to *TNR* from 1914 on. Between 1917 and 1923 he was a member of the editorial staff. Francis Welch Crowninshield (1872-1947), "Crownie" to his friends, edited *Vanity Fair* from 1914 to 1935. Wilson was managing editor of *VF*, 1920-1921. "Fitz" is F. Scott Fitzgerald, of course, and the manuscript Wilson refers to is *The Beautiful and the Damned.* Philip Littell (1868-1943), journalist and author, was an associate editor of the magazine from 1914-1923. Robert Littell (1896-1963) was an associate editor from 1927-1929. John Jay Chapman (1862-1933), literary critic, translator and essayist, was a special favorite of Wilson and the subject of one of his critical appreciations. Christian Gauss (1878-1951) was a professor of modern languages at Princeton and Wilson's mentor and guide in and out of the university. Francis Hackett (1893-1962) was a literary editor of *TNR* from 1914 to 1922. Robert Morss Lovett (1870-1956), professor of English at the University of Chicago, served on the editorial board of the magazine from 1921 to 1930. Malcolm Cowley (1898-) became an editor in 1929 and took over EW's job as editor of the back part. Ted Paramore, Wilson's Princeton classmate, is discussed, along with Stanley Dell, in EW's *Prelude* (1967). Stark Young (1881-1963) served on the editorial staff of *TNR* from 1921 to 1924 while he was writing drama criticism for *The New York Times.* In 1925 he became the drama critic for *TNR* and stayed on until 1947. George H. Soule (1887-1970), editor and author, was associated with the magazine from 1914 to 1918 and again from 1924 to 1936. He wrote primarily on economic subjects.

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your Voltaire and Wilde article, if it's not too long for the *N.R.*, and also, if possible, write something else for us—not only because it would be pleasant to see you in print, but also because they are at me for stuff by promising young writers and especially for stuff dealing with manners and morals,—rather than with politics and economics. . . .

—I am having a very pleasant time here: it is very like a club. The offices are two old houses almost in the river. There are no office hours; you come and go as you please; and lunch is served in a dining room at one. They entertain all the visiting celebrities and liberals, political and literary. As a rule, the visitor, if his views diverge from those of *The New Republic*, is fiercely challenged and made to defend his position against quite unfair odds.—Alvin Johnson, by the way, is none other than our 'laughing economist' of the Columbia Summer School. He is a most curious and interesting man, of whom I shall some day tell you at length. He has reached a complete Nirvana of learning, wisdom and detachment; he is the perfect sceptic and makes Mencken look like an evangelist.

—Incidentally, I finished the article on Mencken a long time ago. *The New Republic* has offered to print part of it (it is very long) but I am trying to get somebody to accept it *in toto*.

Edmund Wilson Jr.

—I am reading Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria* in MS. We are going to run parts of it in *The N.R.* It is, of course, a masterpiece. The concluding scene is the finest piece of historic irony I have read since Renan.

—Have you seen Gauss in *Vanity Fair*? I had a very funny letter from him about it. It has made him famous on the campus; the students are convinced, for the first time, that he must be a great man. . . .

• • •

To Christian Gauss

March 23, 1921
New Republic

Dear Mr. Gauss:

I do hope you won't forget that Mercier article: I feel that perhaps you shouldn't wait too long till after he's dead. Besides, I am anxious to produce interesting articles in order to convince the editor of The New Republic that I am a desirable editor.—An article, introduced by me yesterday, on the morals of the younger generation (by Ted Paramore, of Yale) and asserting that the girls had become more human since they drank and smoked and that chastity was a "much overrated virtue" threw an editorial conference into such consternation that I am anxious to bring them a sober and unexceptionably balanced article to set their minds at rest again.

—I wish you would change your mind about sailing in the spring: I should be glad of a companion to take the curse off the voyage.

Yours always,
Edmund Wilson, Jr.

• • •

To George Soule, The New Republic

July 11, 1934
Provincetown,
Massachusetts

Dear George:

Malcolm [Cowley] suggested to me sometime ago that I write for *The New Republic* on the basis of being paid at half my old rates, the other half being charged against my debt. If this is still agreeable to you, I propose the following arrangement. Pay me on that basis for the two articles of mine you have just published—my old rates were four cents a word for regular stuff, two cents for book reviews. Then I could send you a series of articles out of a book I am writing. The book deals with the development of the modern conception of history from the first attempts to apply scientific methods to the study of human affairs in the past (beginning of the 18th century) to the recent more or less successful efforts to determine the course of events in the present through a technique based on this study (the Russian Revolution and after). I have one large section in a state where I could begin sending you instalments [*sic*] of it immediately. It deals with Vico, Michelet, Renan and Taine and the tradition of the French Revolution generally. I figure that it will come to something like *15,000 words*, which would make *four or five articles* that you could

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use during the summer. The section after that will deal with Marx and Engels, and the third section with the Russians.—My idea is not to write a complete account, but to present the development of the organic conception and scientific study of history through a number of key figures, with the background amply filled in. It is worth doing, I think, because Marxism tends *to get* dissociated from the French revolutionary tradition it grew out of and we tend to look back at the French tradition through its later and less revolutionary, more disillusioned representatives. The ordinary academic discussion of this subject, furthermore, always stops and makes a big detour when it comes to Marx and Engels, so that it leaves out most of what has happened since—and the socialists stop with Marx and Engels, and the Communists with Lenin, or rather with Stalin's version of Leninism. I calculate that, even paying me at this half-rate, most of my debt would be wiped out if you used a large part of the book (the title is "To the Finland Station," and this might be run as a general title to the series). The three sections would come with fairly long spaces in between, so that your readers wouldn't be overwhelmed by it.

Yours sincerely,
Edmund Wilson

• • •

To Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

Wellfleet, Cape Cod
Massachusetts
June 10, 1964

Dear Arthur:

(1) I suppose that you have gone into the question of the relations between TR and Croly and have good authority for your statement that the former influenced the latter more than the other way around. I remember Croly's telling me that *The Promise* had influenced TR at the time he was creating the Progressive Party. He gave me an account of Roosevelt as he used to see him at Oyster Bay. He said that he talked in private like the well-educated man of the world he was, but that as soon as any agent of publicity appeared, he would go into his public act and talk like a demagogue. (Stephen Spender told me something similar about a conversation with Hemingway in Spain. He was perfectly serious and natural when he talked about Stendhal and other literary matters, but switched into his bogus public character the moment there was publicity in the offing. In both cases, of course, they were trying to live up to the myth of the two-fisted American man of action.)

(2) It is Comtist rather than Comtian. See the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

(3) pp. 8-10. It seems to me that the last sentences of this section don't follow from what has gone before. At the bottom of p. 8, the parallelism seems to be between Churchill and Croly, but at the end between Churchill and Roosevelt.

(4) p. 12. Croly told me, when I was writing about Chapman, that the latter's *Causes and Consequences* had made a great impression on him.

(5) This summary of yours is so able that it almost makes it unnecessary to read the book. One thing you don't mention—though I am not sure how explicit it was in the book—is Croly's firm rejection of socialism, his refusal to entertain the idea that any kind of real class conflict could occur in the United States. This was brought home to me for the first time when he came back from a Pacific conference after the Sacco-Vanzetti crisis of the summer of '27. We had been handling this without Herbert's supervision, and—though goodness knows we had hardly been incendiary—he thought that we had gone much too far. Bob Lovett and he were old colleagues and friends, but their temperaments were very different and they went at things from entirely different point of view, and during his absence Lovett had had his head, and as always had been outspoken and aggressive. I had written an editorial paragraph in which I had raised the class issue, and Herbert, on his return, admonished me that the class conflict had had nothing to do with the verdict. I believe that it was from this moment that I realized that he and I could not really agree about such matters (I had always had at the back of my mind the Fabian Essays and the Russian Revolution), and that I began to gravitate toward the socialist Left. Hitherto I had rather cannily been confining myself to the cultural end of the paper. I had never at that time read *The Promise*, so I never was aware of it when an occasional review ran counter to Herbert's version of American history. When this happened—as it did when Allen Tate once wrote something heretical about the Civil War—he would insist on my running a note explaining that the opinions expressed were not those of the editors. I never read *The Promise* till after his death, when I wanted to reorient the magazine and began for the first time to write regular articles on politics and labor. These could hardly have been published while Herbert lived. Everything had had to be kept within the frame of the philosophy of *The Promise*, and he shrank from making issues over current events. He was always, as you say, generalizing in terms of abstractions—a kind of writing which I can't help disliking—I disliked it even more in John Dewey, whom I sometimes had to rewrite!—since I am myself very concrete-minded. Yet it seems to me that Croly was one of the most admirable men I have ever known. In spite of what I have said above, he was never dogmatic and never incoherent, always modest about his own limitation, and very appreciative of what other people could do. I suppose that I sensed very early that there was a body of doctrine there, and managed to keep out of its way. Later I grasped the fact that though the *NR* had started out with a theoretical equality among the editors, so that each, as in the Polish As-

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sembly of Nobles, had a *liberum veto* and could kill by his one individual vote any measure that everybody else had approved, Herbert Croly—I am sure, without knowing what he was doing—eliminated everybody whom he could not dominate (Lovett became only a contributing editor) or who, like the slippery Alvin Johnson, could always, more or less cynically evade him. Stark Young—an unreconstructed Southerner, who agreed with the *NR*, politically and socially, about nothing—and Phil and Bob Littell (Phil Littell was the inventor of the phrase "Crolier than thou") and I simply kept to our end of the paper and thought we were lucky enough to have the freedom and the pay we did. Francis Hackett, a militant Irishman, who persistently but more or less ineffectively attempted to plug his cause on the political side of the paper, used to say that Herbert was like the Great Boyg in *Peer Gynt:* You can't go through, you have to go around.

Sometime remind me to tell you about Croly's relations with Lippmann. I'm sorry that I shan't be here while you are here—unless you stay into September. Now that you are out of the White House, I'd especially like to talk to you. I was enormously interested in your interview with Brandon and am glad that you are doing a book on Kennedy. I suppose that there is no chance whatever of your being in the neighborhood of Talcottville, New York. I used to think it a refuge, where one could have long conversations and engage in a long undisquieted work; but is now only a little way from Rome, New York, one of the most important nuclear warfare centers (they have stacks of bombs right there), where squads of pilots are on duty night and day and ritualistically, at intervals, fly out in the direction of Russia. Last winter I learned with dismay that there were local John Birchers in the neighborhood—the Catholics, I suppose—who had been putting up posters of the "Lynch Warren" type, which would be taken down and then put up again.

As ever,
Edmund

We wish to acknowledge the Beinecke Library at Yale for the letters to Stanley Dell; the Newberry Library in Chicago for the letter to George Soule; the Princeton Library for the letter to Christian Gauss; and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. The letters will appear in a volume of correspondence to be published by Farrar Strauss & Giroux.

Fabulous Tales And Mythical Beasts

by Woody Allen

(The following is a sample of some of world literature's more imaginative creations that I am anthologizing in a four-volume set that Remainder and Sons plans to publish pending the outcome of the Norwegian shepherds' strike.)

The Nurk. The Nurk is a bird two inches long that has the power of speech but keeps referring to itself in the third person, such as, "He's a great little bird, isn't he?" Persian mythology holds that if a Nurk appears on the windowsill in the morning, a relative will either come into money or break both legs at a raffle. Zoroaster was said to have received a Nurk as a gift on his birthday although what he really needed was some grey slacks. The Nurk also appears in Babylonian mythology but here he is much more sarcastic and is always saying, "Ah, come off it." Some readers may be acquainted with a lesser known opera by Holstein called, "Taffelspitz," in which a mute girl falls in love with a Nurk, kisses it, and they both fly around the room till the curtain falls.

The Flying Snoll. A lizard with 400 eyes: 200 for distance and 200 for reading. According to legend if a man gazes directly at the face of the Snoll he immediately loses his right to drive in New Jersey. Also legendary is the Snoll's graveyard, the location of which is unknown even to Snolls and should a Snoll drop dead he must remain where he is until picked up. In Norse mythology Loki attempts to find the

Woody Allen *is in Paris finishing a movie, called* Love and Death, *which he says is a version of* War and Peace.

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Snoll's graveyard but chances upon some Rhine maidens bathing instead and somehow winds up with trichinosis.

The Emperor Ho Sin had a dream in which he beheld a palace greater than his for half the rent. Stepping through the portals of the edifice, Ho Sin suddenly found that his body became young again, although his head remained somewhere between 65 and 70. Opening a door he found another door, which led to another, and soon he realized he had entered 150 doors and was now out in the backyard.

Just when Ho Sin was on the verge of despair, a nightingale perched on his shoulder and sang the most beautiful song he'd ever heard and then bit him on the nose. Chastened, Ho Sin looked into a mirror and instead of seeing his own reflection, he saw a man named Mendel Goldblatt who worked for the Wasserman Plumbing Company and who accused him of taking his overcoat. From this Ho Sin learned the secret of life and it was "never to yodel."

When the Emperor awoke he was in a cold sweat and couldn't recall if he dreamed the dream or was now in a dream being dreamt by his bail bondsman.

The Frean. The Frean is a sea monster with the body of a crab and the head of a certified public accountant. Freans are said to possess fine singing voices that drive sailors mad when they hear them, particularly on Cole Porter tunes. Killing a Frean is bad luck and in a poem by Sir Herbert Figg, a sailor shoots one and his boat suddenly founders in a storm causing the crew to seize the captain and jettison his false teeth in hopes of staying afloat.

The Great Roe. A mythological beast with the head of a lion and the body of a lion, though not the same lion. The Roe is reputed to sleep for 1000 years and then suddenly rise in flames, particularly if it was smoking when it dozed off. Odysseus was said to have awakened a Roe after 600 years but found it listless and grouchy and it begged to remain in bed just 200 more years.

The appearance of a Roe is generally considered unlucky and usually precedes a famine or news of a cocktail party.

A wise man in India bet a magician that he could not fool him whereupon the magician tapped the wise man on the head and changed him into a dove. The dove then flew out the window to Madagascar and had his luggage forwarded. The wise man's wife who witnessed this asked the magician if he could also change things to gold and if so, could he change her brother to three dollars in cash so the whole day shouldn't be a total loss. The magician said, in order to learn that trick one must journey to the four corners of the earth but to go in the off season as three of the corners are usually booked. The woman thought a moment and then set out on a pilgrimage to Mecca, forgetting to turn off her stove. Seventeen years later she returned having spoken with the high Lama and immediately went on welfare. (The above is one of a series of Hindu myths that explain why we have wheat. Author.)

The Weal. A large white mouse with the lyrics to "Am I Blue?" printed on its stomach. The Weal is unique amongst rodents in that it can be picked up and played like an accordion. Similar to the Weal is the *Lunette,* a small squirrel that can whistle and knows the mayor of Detroit personally.

Astronomers talk of an inhabited planet named *Quelm,* so distant from Earth that a man traveling at the speed of light would take six million years to get there although they are planning a new express route that will cut two hours off the trip. Since the temperature on Quelm is 1300 below, bathing is not permitted

Notes to the Previous Tenants

Thank you for leaving the bar of green soap,
the roll of paper towels,
the sponge mop, the bucket.

I tried to scrub the white floor clean,
discovered it impossible,
and realized you had tried too.

Often, no doubt. The long hair in the sink
was a clue to what? Were you
boys or girls or what?

How often did you dance on the floor?
The place was broom clean. Your lives
were a great wind that has swept by.

Thank you. Even the dirt
seemed a gift, a continuity
underlying the breaking of leases.

And the soap, green in veins
like meltable marble, and curved
like a bit of an ideal woman.

Lone, I took a bath with your soap
and had no towel not paper ones
and dried in the air like the floor.

JOHN UPDIKE

JOHN UPDIKE's *new novel,* A Month of Sundays *(Knopf), will be published in January.*

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and the resorts have either closed down or now feature live entertainment. Because of its remoteness from the center of the solar system, gravity is nonexistent on Quelm and having a large, sit-down dinner takes a great deal of planning.

In addition to all these obstacles on Quelm, there is no oxygen to support life as we know it and what creatures do exist find it hard to earn a living without holding down two jobs.

Legend has it, however, that many billions of years ago, the environment was not quite so horrible, or at least no worse than Pittsburgh and that human life existed. These humans, however, resembling men in every way, except perhaps for a large head of lettuce where the nose normally is, were to a man, philosophers. As philosophers they relied heavily on logic and felt that if life existed, somebody must have caused it and they went looking for a man in a navy pea jacket with dark hair and a tattoo.

When nothing materialized they abandoned philosophy and went into the mail order business but postal rates went up and they perished.

The Muted Mouth

Can the Theater Survive Without Drama?

by Jan Kott

The theater of cruelty, the happening, the surrealistic setting, the pop theater, the use of mask and puppet, mime and the nonverbal, and the theater of environment have all reshaped in the last two decades the traditional stage, and created a new sensibility. The theater of the '50s and '60s was made just as much by Brook, Peter Hall and Georgio Strehler, to mention only a few, as by Beckett, Ionesco and Genêt. But now, and especially in America, the experiment has hit rock-bottom, and the theatrical machine is shaking only itself. Drama in its simplest sense—language, poetry, ideas, plot, characters—is evaporating from a lot of university theaters and the underground scene, or is being treated like an expendable commodity. The mouth is grimacing strangely but remains mute. The invention is naked, and the nakedness is a bore.

Jerzy Grotowski was the beginning of the disaster. For his European and American followers he created a model of the theater in which the dramatic text was nonexistent or, at least, nonessential. "In our present state of degeneration, wrote Antonin Artaud in his first manifesto of the Theater of Cruelty, "it is through the skin that metaphysics must be made to re-enter our minds." The naive imitators of Grotowski believed that a stage of tormented bodies tamed by the almighty director would introduce, instead of metaphysics, a revolution both political and sexual into the new contestatory theater.

Grotowski is one of the purest creators in contemporary theater. He challenged classical and romantic drama with a fresh awareness of spiritual and physical suffering. In his best-known production of *Acropolis*, biblical characters slowly marched up to the modern gate of Hell: the furnaces of crematoria in concentration camps. He never dispensed with clear language, however, not even when he deliberately distorted the usual articulation and rhythm of sentences to stress the emotional value of cries and indiscernible whispers. His theater, deeply rooted in traditional Polish romantic drama and Catholicism, appeared as abstract ritual only to foreign audiences. Grotowski's theater is unique, and all the repetition and imitation of this extremely rigorous art has proven to be a flabby falsification and misleading distortion.

Even Peter Brook. Brook is the most professional and accomplished of contemporary directors, and at the same time the greatest rebel against the limits of professionalism and the old structure of established theater. Courageous and eclectic, never satisfied with his past work, he is always searching for new experience. Last year he brought to New York his international experimental group with whom he worked and traveled all around the world for three years, moving from remote African villages to Persepolis. During their few weeks at the Brooklyn Academy of Music,

Jan Kott *is professor of comparative drama at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. His books include* Shakespeare, Our Contemporary *and* The Eating of the Gods.

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they performed each night an improvisation based on the old Persian poem describing the story of birds caught and dressed by men. The actors fluttered and flew up like birds, skipped like birds, hummed like birds, twittered like birds. There were a few moments of dramatic tension when the birds learned human cruelty and perversion. But, as a whole, this elegant, tactful and brilliant performance was like an appetizer before a dinner that was never served.

Brook is a true Proteus. After three years of constant experimentation to the limits of language, he took over this year the direction of a professional theater in Paris. In Europe the frontiers between the artistic and commercial theater, between the seminal and "culinary" (to use Brecht's term), between the avant-garde and the traditional, were and still are extremely flexible. The National Theater in London and the Royal Shakespeare Company shook the Bard as no one had before, uncovering a shocking, illuminating contemporary Shakespeare, as one decade before the Theatre Nationale Populaire in Paris discovered the modernity of Racine, Molière and Corneille.

In America the professional theaters are more commercial than in Europe, and the nonprofessional groups are more amateurish. The American theater has only one classical author, O'Neill, so the need for constant challenge to the classical tradition is not felt as strongly as in Europe. The musical is the most original form of American theater; *West Side Story* and *Hair* were high points in the history of world theater. But because of what is meant by Broadway, in its best and worse senses, 1000 university theaters of 1000 departments of drama and proliferating independent theatrical groups are the only place, and the most natural, to promote the literary theater, rediscover the classics and open the way for new plays. But for different reasons, often contradictory ones, literary theater in America is paralyzed.

Through two decades up to the beginning of the '50s, Stanislavsky's "method" was universally applauded as the best way for teaching acting, for achieving the ultimate artistic truth of performance. The method is the entire identification of the actor with the character he plays. The stage has to create an illusion of real events presented through the invisible and transparent fourth wall. But the Stanislavsky method, for a long time judged to be the unique and best style for presenting Chekhov and Ibsen, turned out to be extremely limited, even fraudulent, for great classical repertory from the Greek drama up to Shakespeare, and from *commedia dell'arte* to Ionesco. The masters of reform, Copeau, Meyerhold, Piscator, anchored the new power of spectacle in sheer theatricality, and the new truth in the unmasking of illusion. Later the impact of the Berliner Ensemble and Brecht's theory of alienation changed everything in theatrical style from the setting to the acting and lighting, first in Germany and then in Scandinavia, Poland, England and finally in France. Of course this was not orthodox Brechtian style, but his indelible imprint remained on theatricality as the opposition to the imitation of real life, on the concept of game, on the stress of intellectual criticism against the hypnotic trance of the old theater, on the importance of modern indignation against the Aristotelian catharsis. "What is 'natural,'" he proclaimed, "must have the force of what is startling."

Brecht's plays were never widely performed in America. His theories only came to be known early in the '50s when the theater of the absurd made its way to this country and the new prophets of the underground movement emerged: Antonin Artaud and, later, Grotowski. The fashionable mood was for frenzy, cruelty and violence. The theater of Brecht was cool, the new fashion was for warm participation between the audience and actors, for the new trance of mysticism and open sex on stage. No antithesis existed; theater was "holy" as a communal experience, and being revolutionary was inevitably "holy." In the state of "holiness" words are not important.

The sudden destitution of Stanislavsky's method left the teaching of acting in a void. In prestigious and selective European schools of drama, "the Conservatoire," the teachers are great actors and directors at the top of their professional careers. But in American no dramatic school, with almost no exception, can afford to hire the real professionals of the theater. The faculty

Gladiators

For Hemingway

Dust returns to dust
even if
dust is a psychic integument
equal to boredom.
Not all who die are dead.
Some die in one's arms.
One acquires a glimpse
of the beyond.
All hail fucking.
Some even die in one's arms
in such a way
that you acquire
a glimpse of the beyond
which may be
beyond
all hail fucking.

NORMAN MAILER

NORMAN MAILER's *most recent book is* Marilyn.

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is often composed of professors of English or drama, or at best of retired professionals who never succeeded. (In this vicious circle they are preparing a new generation of professors of English and drama.)

With the coming of a new emphasis on authenticity, spontaneity and freedom, the natural temptation was to teach nothing but improvisation. Imagination is important for actors, but the result of this stress on improvisation led to the belief that one could do anything with the text, or get rid of it through mime, dance or body touching. The text became a pretext, a raw material for fake rituals and fake archetypes.

Almost two years ago I saw Molière's *The Misanthrope* in a New York drama school. A black boy playing Alceste simulated sex with a white Célimène on the staircase, and later they tore the dress of Célimène's prudish, middle-aged friend and raped her in the first row of seats. Six months ago I attended a rehearsal of Brecht's *Mother Courage* in The Garage. One of her sons driving a wagon was in a strange uniform, the second was naked. When the director asked for my impression during the intermission, I said, "I understood fully that one of the boys is in the all-together, but what shocks me is that the other is dressed."

Almost at the same time I saw Joseph Chaikin's production of *Electra*. Chaikin is one of the most rigorous, responsible and conscious of the underground directors. But for his production he didn't use any of the three Greek tragedies on Electra, nor O'Neill, or Sartre or Giraudoux, but instead chose a second-rate libretto, of which the main line was, "I am a son of Agamemnon and Clytaemnestra." The performance had a few moments of real dramatic tension when Orestes, over the body of his sister, rehearsed with fear and horror the murder of their mother. But it would have been possible to maintain the same immediacy of terror with Euripides' tragedy. Chaikin told me later that he tried to avoid the rhetoric of the old and new plays on Electra, and to stress only the archetypal situation. But it was only his pious wish. The archetypes do not

History Lesson

You were begotten in a vague war.
American planes ran their fingers
through the sky between truces
as your daddy crossed parallels
to plant you as bald as an onion
in 1954.

Two years later you sailed
you think you remember
on a converted troopship full
of new wives and wet pants while
the plum pits of your mother's eyes
wobbled and threatened to come loose.

After that there were knots
in your father's GI work boots
and the sounds of night robbers
ransacking the rooming house
cantering up the staircase
to his delicate Korean lady.

You were six years into English subtitles
when they whisked her away in a bedroll
of lipstick and false eyelashes.

Before the disaster there are omens.
Comets come, the geese lay bloody eggs
and some old crone hacks open
a still-born lamb to read its entrails.

In this case, the landlady tattled
alarm and sent for the cops.

She boiled saltines in blue milk
a whiff of scald that still gags you
until they came with red wristbones
and let you play games with the handcuffs
all the way to the stale clothes of state schools
the lysol washrooms and the tin tray suppers.

It is true that we like down on cowflops
praying they'll turn into pillows.
It is true that our mothers explode
out of the snowballs of dreams
or speak to us down the chimney
saying our names above the wind

or scrape their legs like crickets
in the dead grass behind the toolshed
tapping a code we can't read.

That a man may be free of his ghosts
he must return to them like a garden.
He must put his hands in the sweet rot
uprooting the turnips, washing them
tying them into bundles
and shouldering the whole load to market.

MAXINE KUMIN

MAXINE KUMIN, *whose books include* Up Country *and* The Designated Heir, *won the 1973 Pulitzer Prize for poetry.*

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emerge from a dramatic void, and instead of archetypical tragedy, we are presented with two neurotic children; a boy too weak and a girl too strong, preparing for an unmotivated matricide.

There were long periods in the history of the theater, the time of the Baroque, for example, when the "machine," the technology of illusion, spectacular effects and skill of performance dominated dramaturgy. There were also times, as in early romanticism, when the stage was too tight, like a straitjacket, for the new generation of playwrights. The theater is always a mouth. Sometimes the movement of the lips is so beautiful and fascinating that it doesn't matter what they are mumbling. Sometimes the meaning of the words is so important and illuminating that we forget whose lips are speaking. But the birth of the new theater was always a new mouth speaking words never heard before.

The stalemate of theatrical experimentation is obvious now to almost everyone. The only salvation is to return to the dramatic text and dramatic structure, and to challenge once more, with all this amount of experience, the old and new plays, mercilessly but with respect.

The Joseph H. Hirshhorn Museum

New Seat on the Mall

by Daniel Robbins

The opening on October 4th of a new museum, the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, has made the Washington Mall, already one of the most public spaces in the United States, a sort of cultural heart of America. Its formerly symbolic function is now replaced by a genuine and more representative vitality.

Fortunately President Johnson, with his shrewd, populist instinct for the democratization of culture, perceived that the process of defining art had passed from a narrow elite, sure of its inherited culture. The result is an enormous, somewhat baffling collection, a mirror of our epoch. Had the federal government not seized the opportunity in 1966 to accept the Hirshhorn collection as a gift, to pursue it in fact, it might have left the country or, at best, have been broken up among dozens of American city or university museums. Decentralization might have spread this vast experience where it would have done the greatest good for the greatest number. Yet, had that happened, the impact of the whole enterprise would have been lost. While works of art might have engaged individuals wherever they encountered them, the larger, almost anthropological questions that visitors are now invited to ponder would have been lost.

Although the more than 800 works of the inaugural exhibition chosen out of nearly eight times that number in the total collection have been arranged in more or less chronological sequence (circular museum buildings are especially suited to the simplification of history), the collection has never pretended to historical completeness. In the foreword for the Guggenheim's well-received *Modern Sculpture from the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection* (1962), Abraham Lerner, then curator, now director, wrote that the collection, already in formation for more than 30 years, "never aimed at an all-inclusive historical survey of sculpture." Fourteen years ago neither Hirshhorn nor Lerner could have known that the stunning appearance of their arbitrarily chosen examples—ranging from Daumier through Duchamp-Villon to David Hare and David Smith—marked the end of the period when both men could freely indulge their independent tastes and eccentricities, contentedly aware of the fact that they were not yet responsible to "trustees, budgets, patrons and history." Four years later, with the gift of the collection to the nation, both men inevitably became conscious of historical gaps. Certainly the last years have imposed the strain of double obligation: to continue to pursue with unabated enthusiasm the original and personal directions of the collection while also sustaining the same level of enthusiasm for the new task of filling in the background. In this background, especially in the area of European painting, there are some noteworthy ex-

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amples; but I sense a deliberate historical choice, a desire to secure works that serve either as foils or as sources for strong American works.

The painting collection is a sustained love affair with American art, not merely a tentative series of occasional trysts with exceptional individual art works that might measure up to European counterparts. It represents a gradual acceptance of the whole complex fabric as it developed, absorbing influences from all over the world. Washington now has a museum that can reveal many of the influences that made the visual arts in America as rich as they are. In conjunction with the once-derided collection of the Smithsonian's National Collection of Fine Arts, the opportunities for careful examination of the development of an American tradition are almost unparalleled. Some may call this lack of discrimination as, indeed, they already have; but it is precisely its breadth that makes this gift invaluable. Used intelligently and with sensitivity, the large reserves of the Hirshhorn will assist in re-evaluations without which there will be no vitality in art.

One example that strikes a visitor to the opening show is the juxtaposition of works by Gorky and de Kooning with contemporary painting by Philip Evergood. To questions we are accustomed to ask about Gorky—what was his relationship to Picasso, to European surrealism, whether he was the first of the New York School or only a precursor—is added visible evidence of his relationship to *all* the '30s and '40s, even to social narrative painting, from which he is usually so rigorously separated. This kind of installation does not merely remind us of what an effort modern art was in this country during the 1930s, it also shows the richness of the contrasting traditions, which we now see were not rigidly self-contained. The attempt to separate something known as "modernism" from all that once struggled to be modern must begin again for there is no simple test or formal answer to the question of what makes some art greater than other art or, indeed, to what makes some art art and the rest nonart. The crossing and recrossing of ideas from the group known as the American abstract artists to social realists and even regionalists is as fascinating as it was surely baffling to the hostile members of each camp 40 years ago, when these groups, even these individual artists, quite reasonably regarded themselves as the definition of the future. The fact that these various camps can be well represented, that they appealed simultaneously to a private collector who was not governed by the idea of completeness, is disquieting to those who propose sharply defined, exclusive criteria of quality.

In art when the future arrives it is always surprising, no matter what direction had been predicted by previous art. To judge an artist and his works on the basis of whether or not his art suggests the major trends of the future is as exasperating as allowing representative objects to summarize the past. Awareness of the social as well as formal complexity of art and the process of its definition imposes a special burden on the exhibition policy of a new museum—especially in Washington—the very existence of which has raised questions that the other national museums have not and probably need not answer. It would be a boon to Washington to have the Hirshhorn Museum continue to stimulate, by its acquisitions and exhibitions programs, an awareness of the breadth and intensity of the varying sensibilities that operate at any one moment in the production of art. A treat for tourists from all over, visits to the museum should be mandatory for our government officials, for inside the new circle is housed a sure index to the country they serve.

Ever since 1966, when the gift was received, this collection has provoked controversy. Published previews of the new museum were suspicious or even unabashedly hostile. Many factors account for this equivocal reception, surely not the reaction that a great and generous donor might have expected. We have been taught to admire collectors who loved art and shared it with the public. Joseph Hirshhorn gave the American people a collection of modern sculpture without parallel in the world, as well as a group of 4000 paintings that record a good part of the history of American vision since the mid-19th century. He must occasionally wonder if he would not have received more appreciation had he sold his treasures in a series of sensational auctions at Sotheby's where most of the sculpture would have been snapped up by European (German) and Japanese buyers. If he could choose to do it now, Arabs or Persians might flock to the auction rooms to ensure that someday Saudi Arabia or Teheran could have a sculpture garden greater than the one Billy Rose gave to Israel's National Museum.

The climate for establishing art museums has changed radically during the last generation. The last three major art institutions to open have all met with a measure of skepticism, from members of the cultural community as well as from philistines. In California the Getty Museum, its architecture based upon a private Roman villa and its emphasis on traditionally respectable art, is widely regarded as anachronistic. The Neuberger Museum at the State University of New York, Purchase, was criticized by Hilton Kramer for the allegedly uneven quality of its once-experimental collections (modern American) as well as for its architecture (Philip Johnson). And the Hirshhorn Museum, because of its location, because of the name, business and ancestry of its donor, is likely to continue to be attacked for some time to come. It is said that the architecture is terrible, the collection a "pig in a poke," and the museum—bearing its donor's name—an outdated national capitulation to vanity. Hirshhorn,

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Neuberger, Getty and the rest of us have been reminded of the changes that have occurred in art and culture since Isabella Stuart Gardner built her Fenway Court palace in Boston or Henry Clay Frick his museum in New York. The Hirshhorn joins the Freer Gallery on the south side of the Mall as a tangible and clearly expensive symbol of recognition and arrival. Moreover, like the Freer, but unlike the National Gallery (the Mellon, as it is still often—but unofficially—called in Washington), it bears the name of its creator, thereby fulfilling familiar legends or dreams of fortune and fame. But the name Hirshhorn is different from Freer, or Mellon or Widener or Kress, all principal sources of the great components of the National Gallery; and, similarly, the art within the round Gordon Bunshaft-designed building also is newly arrived. The distance from the Freer or the Mellon to the Hirshhorn is analogous to the distance from Chinese to Japanese art; the knowing Chinese connoisseur, always very polite, will simply smile during a conversation about Japanese work.

The collection that Hirshhorn assembled is not primarily directed, as were many earlier museums, to the idea of masterpieces. Indeed the very idea of masterworks is now questioned by the comparative speed with which our sensibilities have been compelled to accept the traditions of other cultures as well as the changes within our own, and by the size and scope of the world's art galleries. When donors of art were universally acclaimed as public benefactors instead of suspected as tax-dodgers or self-seekers, masterworks were paintings and sculptures that were illustrated in history books, or cost a lot, or both. The Hirshhorn collection has more than its share of these (for instance Rodin's *Burghers of Calais,* which one hopes may stir the consciences of some elected officials). By now, however, publishing houses, museums and television having done their work of public art education so well almost every museum visitor has at least a blurred image of a masterpiece. The public knows perfectly well that some art costs a lot of money and it has begun to wonder why. There is more art now than there used to be; infinitely more people participate in its definition.

This complex fact cannot be dismissed in the long process of evaluation that begins with the public

Photos courtesy of Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

The Burghers of Calais, Auguste Rodin

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opening of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. It is the central reason, the only valid reason, why the collection will provoke controversy. Those whose business it has become to define mainstreams and to distinguish important (and expensive) works of art from minor or no-works of art will once again have to justify their histories. That is, whole organized traditions that explain the development of visual conventions, the quality of some, the worthlessness of others, will be called into question by the fresh juxtapositions arranged in the Hirshhorn Museum.

Unlike buyers of masterworks who bought at the top and had only to worry about authenticity, Hirshhorn, true to the image of self-made speculator, bought as often as possible directly from the artist, perhaps inspired by distrust of fast-talking or charming middlemen. Like a man who buys his suits off the rack, paying for what he can use rather than for lush overhead costs, he frequently bypassed dealers, curators and scholars whose presumed superior knowledge adds a percentage to price, and climbed around the lofts of New York, meeting and bargaining with artists, honing his vision, buying three works instead of one. This is the source of the pejorative allegation that his collection was acquired "wholesale." In addition, the fact, much appreciated by the artists, that he paid for his acquisitions if not in cash at least promptly (while more distinguished and, yes, richer, collectors would often allow their obligations to ride for months or, in some cases, even years) has added to the apocryphal lore of a cash-and-carry bargain hunter.

Hirshhorn, who is a direct, no-nonsense man, bought art for itself, not for its atmosphere, and was greedily involved in its acquisition as, ultimately, all great collectors are. But some mask their greed and sensuality better than others. By stripping away the traditional rituals of purchase, of detached savor, he made it seem as though he were buying merchandise. But art *is* merchandise as almost any dealer eventually has to admit, in spite of museums, and as the deaccessioning scandals of last year made plain. The quality of art may or may not bear a relationship to its being bought and sold, but it surely bears none to the manner in which transactions are conducted.

The architecture of culture palaces often reflects the hopes of the builders, the attitude they desire to shape among visitors. There has been much discussion about Bunshaft's circular design for the Hirshhorn, so unlike the 1921 Freer and the 1941 Mellon National Gallery as an appropriate repository for art. Both earlier museums were designed to enhance what was once regarded as the prevailing style of architecture for national capitals; the Hirshhorn is no different. When the Mellon opened, Joseph Hudnut, in an article "The Last of the Romans," described it as "a pious collaboration of wealth and power with the priesthood of the Roman tradition." The vast palace, which cost $15 million in the late '30s (the US government, not Hirshhorn, got a bargain in 1974 with the same price tag!) "invites at every step the astonishment of the visitor, seducing him with expense and weight, crushing him under its firm assertion of authority." He suggested that it added "nothing to the delight or value of the objects exhibited."

If this criticism has a familiar ring, it should be recalled that in 1959 the newly opened Guggenheim was seen as bearing the burden of Frank Lloyd Wright's personality, which was hostile to the objects that were to be displayed within. Ada Louise Huxtable once characterized the Hirshhorn as "colossal funerary" and more recently as a "functional fortress," as the "biggest white marble doughnut" (the white marble, replaced by pink-toned aggregate, fell victim to inflation); so it is still widely criticized. But it takes its place in official Washington architecture almost like a missing puzzle piece, filling the same architectural role today that the National Gallery did earlier. It stands in relation to its source, the Guggenheim, as John Russell Pope's design for masterpieces stands in relation to the Pantheon and ancient Rome. These sources are inflated for the twin purposes of reinforcing official endorsement and accommodating crowds. They are the functional symbols of a national desire to

Portrait of Vartoosh, Arshile Gorky

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prove that art is honored and to demonstrate culture to all comers.

There will be many visitors to the excellent facilities of the Hirshhorn, and some may be touched by the meaning of a work of art. Perhaps they will be more open to the effect of the art because of the more neutral character of the interior space. Yet even the palatial architecture of the National Gallery, 35 years later, seems not to have interfered with its ability to stage—at least during the last half-dozen years—some of the liveliest shows in the country. Nor did it deter thousands of young peace demonstrators from taking refuge in its halls during the marching days of the late '60s. Still it would be wonderful to see a federal museum express individual quality as well as functional capacity without faltering under the weight of national self-consciousness. Perhaps I. M. Pei's new wing on the National will be able to turn the trick. His museums in New York have been very successful, but central New York landscape is very different and a good deal more comfortable than the landscape of the Mall.

What happens inside an art museum is the real issue, the impossible-to-measure experience that takes place between the individual visitor and works of art in a situation that, however curators and scholars try to structure it, is finally a free dialogue between artists and people.

Since You Asked

Why I'm Not Bored

by Stanley Kauffmann

The two most frequent questions are: "How many films do you see a week?" "Don't you get bored with going to films?" I've been writing about them in *TNR* since 1958, with one intermission of a year and a half, have heard each of these questions at least once a week in that time, and am always pleased by them. As for the first, the number has varied sharply from none to 12—usually it's about three—but the point is that most weeks it wouldn't have been less even if I weren't a critic. And, grown gray in the ranks, I still get a thrill out of getting in free. I have figured with my wife that, by the money we have saved on tickets, we are now abstractly, if not in the Nelson Rockefeller class, at least up there with William J. Ronan. Once in a great while there have been too many. On two separate occasions there were two days in which I had to see four films each day—no kind of record but sickening to me. After each of those pairs of days it was a week before I could see another picture. But most of the time when I'm asked the question, I can't really remember how many times I've gone in the previous week or two, it all seems so natural. And therefore pleasant.

As to the second and more interesting question, the answer is a firm no. A happy no. To salute the obvious, this doesn't mean that I never see boring films or that I am unborable. On the contrary I'm somewhat more acutely borable—by reason, I tell myself, of professional acuteness—than most of my friends. But the *idea* of going to films is never boring. The editor of *TNR* once generously suggested that I also write about television from time to time. The prospect of merely crossing the living room to switch on TV dramas was numbing. But even when I have to leave the house to see the most unpromising of films (and I limit myself to those with at least some promise), there is something beyond the specifics of the film that tingles and attracts.

To begin with there is the elemental kinetic aspect. Like billions of people throughout the world since 1900, the mere physical act of filmgoing is part of the kinesis of my life—the getting up and going out and the feeling of coming home, which is a somewhat different homecoming feeling from anything else except the theater (and which is totally unavailable from TV). When I am not going out, rather frequently, to films (as a New Yorker this is also true for me of the theater), it's because I'm ill or sore beset with work or isolated somewhere in the country. To have my life unpunctuated by the physical act of filmgoing is almost like walking with a limp, out of my natural rhythm.

Past that there is the community, also known to billions, of being in a group dream, a group reality. This

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is true of the theater as well, but with films there is a paradox: because of the greater darkness there is, even in the middle of a group, the sense of private ownership of the occasion. That ownership has attachments. No one goes to a film theater—or a press screening-room—without taking with him all of his filmgoing past, including his initial fear. (For years students have been writing papers for me on their recollections of their very first film experiences, and, more often than not, that first experience included a feeling of fear.) That fear is never quite lost, perhaps, though gradually it is understood, is used to underpin and nourish other responses. No one can go to a film theater without taking with him his parents and small friends and the first grapplings of romance in the balcony. And no one can sit in a film theater without acknowledging, however secretly, that this is where some part of his psyche originated. Messenger boy or mogul, peasant or Pope, there can hardly be anyone alive whose secret fantasies, controlled and uncontrolled, have not in some measure been made by film. This has never been so widely true of any other art. My guess is that it is not yet true of TV, may never be true. The size of the film screen in itself plays a part in its sacerdotal function; it ministers down to us while the TV screen paws upward, smaller than we are, vulnerable to dials and switches. (If films ever really become principally available through TV cassettes, as sporadically has been prophesied for years, whole psychic orders will have to be redeployed.)

All this exercise and enjoyment even before we touch matters of art, discrimination, esthetics! Once we get to the question of specific films rather than generic experience, the specter of boredom raises its threat. Some films turn out to be just as boring as feared, though not so many as the fulfilled dreads in the theater and not many more than with new fiction. No one assumes that a literary critic gets bored, yet having worked in both kinds of criticism I know that the rewards of poor films are more savorable, more certain, than those of poor novels.

In Westerns, however rotten, there are horses, the creak of leather, the reach of landscape. In any film there are likely to be attractive women or, if you prefer, attractive men. For myself, heterosexually straitened though I am, I get a kick out of seeing O'Toole and Newman and Redford, just as I used to with Cooper and Grant and March. Then there are syntactical rewards. Richard Lester's maritime thriller *Juggernaut* misses the boat, but its editing and photography are in themselves thrilling. Visconti's *Ludwig* was drear, but the costumes were sumptuous. The music in *Once Upon a Time in the West* was like a Puccini sauna. I don't suggest that anyone go to see those films for those reasons: I'm just answering the once-a-week question.

There are other, greater things. Direction, for instance. Joseph Sargent, out of TV, has done a really crisp job with *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three*. I enjoyed the way he used the subway tunnels and the racing through the streets and the compact arena of the hijacked subway car in a picture that, as a whole, was fading before it finished. (I couldn't read the novel.)

And in some dismal pictures one can often find bright spots of acting. A thriller called *11 Harrowhouse* is laden with Charles Grodin and Candice Bergen and a finale that was apparently devised by a moron on LSD; but James Mason plays an aging diamond expert, dying of cancer, who revenges himself on his niggardly employers by collaborating with thieves and he creates a whole man, quietly, in the middle of roaring nonsense. Jon Voight has the leading role in a more seriously inane thriller *The Odessa File* and presents the young German journalist he is supposed to be, even to a beautifully precise accent. (Following that hilarious convention under which Germans in Germany, speaking English to one another in English-language films, use German accents.)

It would be easy to put together a large bouquet, a garden, several hothouses of flowers culled from poor pictures. They don't quite compensate for those pictures, not even for the waste of themselves in those pictures, still they are rewards not easily accessible in poor examples of other arts. Theater performances, yes, when they stand out from a bad script and/or a bad company. As for other matters, although the theater's symbolic systems are just as "real" as film's, they are less intensely packed to the square millimeter and, when one is forced away from the foreground by tedium, the theater's supportive symbols are less varied, less continuingly interesting. Boris Aronson's beautiful setting for *Company* didn't *continue* to make up for a dullish evening as Tonino delli Colli's cinematography almost did for Pasolini's *Decameron*.

But that's enough of scrounging, of beggarly gratitude for edible scraps amidst the swill. The chief reason for never being bored with the idea of film is that boredom is incompatible with hope, and hope is more of a constant in film than in virtually any other art in America. Fiction and poetry and dance and theater performance (as against playwriting) are in good estate, with good prospects; but (say the experts I've met) this is not true of painting or sculpture or musical composition or architecture. And no art is more persistently, almost irritatingly pulsing with prospects than the film.

Distribution of films is in difficulties, but it always was: only the type of trouble changes. The vulgar and the violent are more popular than the good; so what else is new? Nothing rotten that happens in film—and most of what does happen is rotten—can negate the fact that it is still an avenue of possibilities, an

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expanding nebula of esthetic mysteries, a treasury of aptness for our time.

Eight years ago I published an essay called "The Film Generation" that is now sometimes knocked because the size of the audience has not much increased, has not regained anything like the size of the mid-1940s, and worse, because some of the best pictures that come along—works by Bresson and Bellocchio, for instance—have short first-run lives. But I wouldn't alter much in that essay today. (Except for one addition: I've learned since writing it, by a lot of travel around the country and through the chance to serve on the Theater Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts, that theater appetite among young people is lesser only in size, not in urgency, to film appetite.)

What Rules Earth

Spider fleeing
    from web-eye to twig
in awe of my breath

Deer cringing in bracken
    Hare's long ear-veins
        thud.
    at your foot crash

Clam's mouth full of oil

        And who
            but those who see
        can see the unchangeable
    Redwood
        tense its billowy fronds
    when the Human comes too close?

(Crouch behind city wall
        to write this)

Axe-concussion
chainsaw nerve-bite
cruel child-race

        while the moon
            feeds
        on man after man.

RICHARD TILLINGHAST

RICHARD TILLINGHAST *is assistant professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley.*

The film audience is smaller than it used to be because, obviously, free movies are available at home, as well as free vaudeville; but the fact that the film audience has not completely disappeared in the face of that situation is itself proof of that audience's vitality. Far from disappearing, that audience is now increasing. (*Variety* front-page headline, Oct. 9, 1974: "U. S. Film B.O. Runs Highest in Years." Their estimate is that this year's total receipts will be the highest since the 1946 peak, even allowing for inflation.) And if the TV-threat argument were valid, there ought now to be no film theaters at all.

Blacks flocking to cheap "blaxploitation" films, yes. Kung-fu kooks, yes. Hard and soft porno for hard and soft fans, yes. But if statistics prove that those types account for a lot, statistics prove other things as well. *Somebody* is taking those thousands of film courses in those 600-plus universities and colleges that offer them; *somebody* is buying those films books and magazines that continue to flood out, and attending those festivals that continue to spring up and those film societies and campus and community series. It's not quite a nation of Bazins and Agees as yet, but to argue that the smaller audience has not improved qualitatively is either a confusion of cynicism with taste or a fear of improvement, a nostalgia for Hedda Hopper's Hollywood. The fact that Ozu doesn't run very long in the nation's biggest city doesn't prove any more about the status of the art and its audience than the fact that *Boesman and Lena* didn't break the *Hello, Dolly!* record or Berryman's *Dream Songs* doesn't outsell Rod McKuen.

Film is in money trouble these days because of inflation, but so is everything, including book publishing. Proportionately money doesn't control the making of films a great deal more than it does the publication of poetry and fiction: if investments are higher, so are possible profits. The money squeeze is not new: finance has always worked cruelly in the film world even when money seemed to be more free (true of publishing, too), distribution has always been tyrannical, you've always been just as successful as your last picture, the rotten ones have always seemed to be surging up to our nostrils, and still the good ones have been made here and abroad—where the difficulties are different only in nomenclature—and the lesser ones have had their compensations.

To me this combination of views is hard-headed, with no touch of Pollyanna—unless there is also a touch of Pollyanna in the human race's general insistence on survival. Concurrent with our lives runs this muddied, quasi-strangulated, prostituted art, so life-crammed and responsive and variegated and embracing, so indefinable no matter how long one strings out phrases like these, that to deny it seems to me to deny the worst and the best in yourself, a chance to help clarify which is which, and which is in the ascendant on any particular day. No matter how much I know

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about a film's makers or its subject before I go, I never *really* know what it's going to do to me: depress me with its vileness, or just roll past, or change my life in some degree, or some combination of all three, or affect me in some new way that I cannot imagine. So I like being asked whether filmgoing ever gets boring: it makes me think of what I don't know about the next film I'm going to see.

Diary

Our Music Now

by Ned Rorem

Musically speaking America is the most vital land in the world, and also the most abject. Vital, because composition—music's so-called creative aspect (the first aspect by which the cultural health of a country must be judged)—has finally matured into model independence. Abject, because the dissemination of this composition, through performance and funding, is slow and painful.

Movie, art and drama critics review mostly the new. Only music critics must still think up words for Beethoven because only they review performance equally with what's performed. In other arts the past is exception; in music the past is rule.

Music reviewing is music rehearing.

The most representative American—unlike West European—composition is, for the moment, noncollaborative, specialized and mostly for chamber groups (some quite large), usually without vocalists.

Sonic scenery, once named "incidental music," has not been an assumed appendage of our straight theater for years. I don't mean that compact medium called musical comedy, which thrives today, but "background" or "mood" pieces. Not taste but economy so raised the price of original stage music that plays now use, when anything, canned sound effects.

Movies? No treatise is yet published on music's conditioning role in film. Bad music wrecks good movies, good music can redeem a bad movie, and any music can radically alter the intention of any given scene. Its "abstract" (though not neutral) force makes music more subliminally persuasive than any other periphera of film, something *cinéastes* have known from the start. Those handy pianists for silents grew up into the Steiners of talkies. Such studio employees—providers of auditory decor—gave way in turn to "serious" imports from New York. Then nothing. After the high-class wartime documentaries, movies produced no distinguished scores—no nonpop music with sufficient character to stand alone. Unlike stage music, which was priced into starvation, movie music depreciated with the advent of star directors, in Europe as in America.

Advanced directors employ hack composers, as though to join hands with a vital musician would constitute a threat. Or they too use the past. The famous concert accompanying *2001*, for instance, contains not one original note (of course by definition a movie about the future cannot use music of the future), while our breakthrough movies, which otherwise receive citations, content themselves with theme songs or straight rock.

There is no real collaboration in movies anymore. There is no stage music anymore.

There never was nor will be television music. Insofar as TV is not real life reportage it is not TV. Any music heard (seen) on TV is less good than on a stage or phonograph, even music conceived for TV. The long shot is meaningless on TV. The closeup is TV's triumph. Closeups are arias. An opera made from only arias is not an opera. Even if it were, to present these arias as a series of closeups would be redundant. Consider the claustrophobia of *Scenes From a Marriage*—sung!

The appetizing possibility of opera conceived for movies, a format that may prove the salvation of the hybrid monster, has yet to be tried. Tried and true is what composers meanwhile persist in setting when

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not foisting upon us mixed-media propositions self-titled opera.

Barber's revised *Anthony and Cleopatra* (on Shakespeare) will soon be granted a second chance after its sabotage years ago, although the new version remains Old Opera. Elsewhere the visual distractions of a Berio seem no more musically professional than in high school, and qualify as New Opera only because the composer calls them that.

If opera, even at its most outrageous, is distinguished from show-biz tantrums by the formality of its word settings for singing actors (*i.e.*, by its superimposition of one set of symbols upon another set that will be interpreted theatrically), then only Stanley Silverman comes close to exemplifying the definition. His vehicles for real singers dadaisticly amalgamate all styles past and present. They are small scale (dramatized song cycles really) and financially feasible for schools. Although they could be blown up for production in Tibet or Penn Station, they do not offer themselves as Masterpieces.

Those still awaiting a composer of the Great American Opera find their chief candidate in Leon Kirchner. Kirchner, a maker of "abstract" chamber and orchestral works, is not known for vocal settings (if indeed he's done any), much less for lyric dramas. Yet during a decade his musicalizing of Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King* has been the loudest secret since *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* before its unveiling.

Can Great American Operas be devised from Great American Novels? Previous chauvinist contenders have all been on original librettos. Not that viable music can't be based on preexisting literature (some think Verdi's *Otello* greater than *Meistersinger*); it's just that American composers haven't yet added convincing dimensions to classical European plays. Or even to native blockbusters. (Britisher Benjamin Britten with his *Turn of the Screw* and *Billy Budd* has, for whatever reason, dealt more movingly than any American opera-maker with preestablished American texts.)

Need for the Big Statement—still acute for book critics—has become a thing of the past for most musicians, due largely to inroads of pop where breath is short and inspiration collective.

Only two composers have come up with memorable ballet scores in 30 years—that is since the happy postwar collaborations of Martha Graham with Copland, Schuman, Barber, Dello Joio. They are Lucia Dlugoszewski, whose concoctions for Erick Hawkins' choreography are a hypnotic joy to both ear and eye (she herself performs on instruments of her own strange construction, thus replacing the late irreplaceable Harry Partch), and Leonard Bernstein, whose accompaniments for dance remain paragons of theatricality even *sans* dance.

Balanchine's caused nothing in American music. Stravinsky's French.

No other serious composer has come so close to inheriting that part of Stravinsky's specialness that allowed for the staginess of sound—which asked that music be visual while retaining its exclusivity as music—than Bernstein. But as exception to prove any premise, he's not to be pigeonholed.

The most traveled composer in the world, he is the least cosmopolitan; his music, all of it, stems straight from America's most identifiable heritage, jazz. Yet Bernstein is America's first real Jewish composer, if Jewish, before meaning Semitic or Talmudic, means viewpoint. This meaning, consciously conveyed to his art, renders Bernstein's sounds and subjects more Jewish than those of, say, Gershwin and Copland with their Carolinian Negroes and Appalachian cowboys; or Hugo Weissgall and Marvin Levy with their Strindbergian and O'Neill heroines; or David Diamond and William Schuman with their fondness for Waspish symphonic forms.

And Bernstein is the only "classical" American who stays, in heart and in practice, a collaborator. Nine-tenths of his work is for theater (ballet, musical comedy, the ritual mass, movies) where he joins with others; when composing opera or a straight concert work, he collaborates with himself.

There exists no more beguiling melodist. That this gift can be promoted not only charmingly but scarily is shown with a craft ever more distilled. His best piece to date, the *Dybbuk* dances, succeeds in conveying maximum Bernstein volatility through an almost silent tension. His niche in public fancy makes him—as such things are judged—our second most significant (although curiously not very influential) composer over 50. The first is Elliott Carter.

From Stravinsky, Bernstein inherited the catholic virtuosity; from Carter the grand-style fame. And Carter is the only composer in the world, not excluding Boulez, who could wear such a mantel with gravity—none other seems needed anymore.

How balanced with Bernstein's heat is Carter's ice! The difference between theatrics and dramatics. Bernstein is all civilized contrast, sentiment, narrative; Carter is monochrome madness, perfunctory, nonprogrammatic. Storytelling in Carter's music translates only as metaphor—as events occurring to instruments, not to humans. Such strictly instrumental occurrences sometimes cause this composition to be termed uncompromising. It eschews carnal appeal, nor does it presume to charm. Seduction in sound comes facilely through the admixture of orchestral timbres, through richness of color. Though Elliott Carter is skilled with that palette he is far more colloquial with intimate (though no less huge formally) conveyances. Except for the crimson human voice. Indeed he most excels in that grayest, that most undifferentiated and, they say, most risky (because most

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exposed) and "pure" of mediums, the string quartet, for which few composers since Bartók have written with much sense of necessity.

Necessity, however, is what Carter projects. Not, as some would have it, the necessity of intellect but the clean-cut urgency of a child's fit. Like never-resting souls tangled in hell proceed his bowed counterpoints, and always, performance after performance, tangled *in the same way,* like those viscous strands on a Pollock canvas that, actually still, seem yet to move through time. Nothing great is ever left to chance, and great Carter surely is in his ability to notate insanity with a precision that, after the fifth or 12th hearing, renders the notes as logical as the placement of beasts in the Peaceable Kingdom. In the unwhorish communicability of the logic of folly (or the folly of logic) lies Carter's force, a force particularly intense for young citizens to whom personal grandeur seems again (after years of mindless group grooving) to be a need.

Or so I hear it. Clearly there's no such thing as understanding music, but one can misunderstand intelligently.

Our female composers are in all ways equal to their brothers. If Dlugoszewski is queen of the dance, Miriam Gideon has for long decades been, in the cognoscenti eye, a weaver of vocal fabrics at once taut and tender. Her contemporary, Louise Talma, a more muscular craftswoman, is drawn to large instrumental expressions (although she's the only composer ever to have obtained a libretto from Thornton Wilder, the important *Alcestiad,* an opera yet to be heard in America).

No musician mixes more exciting orchestral hues or draws more personal melodic lines than does youngish Barbara Kolb, and none projects more purposeful know-how in vast formats than does Betsy Jolas.

Here are but five of a growing body of women composers. To single them out as such (deftly avoiding words like "lovely" that I often use for men) is maybe unfair since they no longer do so themselves. They do not wish your ear to recognize their efforts as feminine—as ladies' music rather than music. Nor really do they endure more discrimination than male composers; composers as a species are so foreign to mass consciousness—even to music lovers—that they go undespised in one amorphous lump. (Talma's opera remains unperformed not because she's a woman, nor yet a bad woman, but because she's a woman who writes operas—as financially shaky as a man who writes operas.) Composers are all freaks, yes, but the public doesn't see them. What doesn't exist can't be mocked.

Conducting is visibly a domain of males. Fewer conductors hold good jobs here today than there have been Presidents of the United States. Our country boasts less than 20 first-rate orchestras, and the women's committees who largely run these orchestras are not about to let any of their own claim such plums. Even American males aren't much in the running. With notable exceptions our conductors are foreigners.

In a gracefully talkative documentary of the trials of America's sole female symphonic conductor, Antonia Brico, age 73, shows herself more advanced sociologically than musically. Through all her lauding of sacred monsters like Schweitzer and Schubert we hear no word about any American performer or composer of either sex, nor even a passing reference to what we call modern music. Liberated women can remain reactionary artists.

A decade ago the Russian cellist Rostropovich commissioned a number of large-scale vehicles from composers all over the world. That he was also a great interpreter seems slight when you realize that, emerging from a creatively archaic country, he singlehandedly caused to exist most of the important cello literature of this half-century. Imagine an American cellist, emerging from this creatively advanced country, pursuing such a notion! Or any of our virtuosos. No Cliburn, no Stern has yet—not even for their immortality—voluntarily paid for a new work, and those few big names who have, have through foundations.

Yes Europeans are general practitioners and Americans are specialists in everything except recital song repertory. Young German or Italian or French singers master the problem of their native tongue first and foremost, learn thoroughly their country's vocal output, and often spend distinguished careers singing solely in their own language. Young American singers learn every language *except* their own. Graduation recitals feature songs in German, Italian and French, none of which the students "think" in; if they do offer an English encore it is tossed off with a fake foreign accent.

Due partly to the high majority of European teachers who deem English unsingable, partly to the opera-oriented bias of students themselves, the voice recital has atrophied in the United States. The students (those not aiming for musical comedy) sniff neither glory nor money in English-language repertory. They feel no pride in—scarcely an awareness of—the long tradition of songs in English. To declare as they do that English is ungrateful is to see clearly the thrilling pitfalls that in foreign tongues are invisible. The only thing bad about modern vocal settings is bad music.

A young soprano's most glittering model is unfortunately Beverly Sills who, once she became a star in Douglas Moore's *Ballad of Baby Doe,* renounced both her language and her country for the rabble-rousing trifles of 18th-century Italy.

People in the Midwest imagine the New York marketplace to be congenial and homogenized. They ask a

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visiting composer for anecdotes about famous performers. He doesn't know any. FPs don't play his music so he has no occasion to meet them. He rationalizes that they wouldn't "know how" anyway.

Expecting her to reply, "they don't know what they're doing," I ask Barbara Kold how the Marlboro contingent sounded when, exceptionally, they played one of her not-easy pieces. (That contingent is, after all, drenched from birth to death in 19th-century middle-Europe *chef d'oeuvres*, whereas Kolb has been hearing her music mostly at the hands of Fromm Foundation specialists.) "They're terrific," she answers. "They play it like music, not like modern music."

Finding myself on yet another composers' panel our exchange becomes amiable chitchat. The very 20th-century phenomenon of the "Roundtable On New Music" suddenly seems obsolete.

There used to be mutual stimulation. Musicians of conflicting persuasions goaded each other about ideology. With cheers and sneers, flying fur and splitting hair, the identical questions and answers were spouted for the thousandth time. It all grew too loud, lasted too long and settled nothing, but it was therapeutic.

In the past years, simultaneous with revolutions in more urgent arenas, composers of quite different schools and aims have become live-and-let-live. They even play each others' music because they are united in a sort of ho-hum defiance against standard virtuosos who ignore them. When they do join at roundtables their purpose is not to chastise each other but to present a united front before performing units. They want representation, copyright revision, their just rewards through royalty revisions, money from the government. To make these demands heard in high place leaves composers no time to meet on panels. They're too busy scribbling recommendations for each other to the National Endowment for the Arts.

Endowments. We welcome their encouragement, though it's touch and go. Certainly the trumpeted cultural explosion, if it exists, is independent of private or public sponsorship, and like most explosions exudes a residue of destruction and waste.

Lots of money is being misspent by self-appointed committees (like Fromm, the once noble) to determine Important American Works, the results to be funneled to conductors, here and abroad, too lazily busy to examine the music themselves. Both state and national councils of the arts require that not only unknown petitioners but composers with long-standing credentials prove (in words and before the fact) that the music they need money to compose will be both a masterpiece and a profitmaker. Ford asks fewer questions, merely slashes the budget.

Foul times flourish. As though nearly all of us (including those who love it) were not already captive to rock's ubiquitous onslaught, WNCN, America's most serious music station (most serious in that, without too hard a sell, it services "good" music—much of it contemporary—to the largest per capita area), is, at this writing, screaming for help. Whether or not it is devoured by yet another pop-oriented policy, the much-publicized issue degrades all concerned.

Do these discouragements change the shape as well as the bulk of fine art today? Qualifications determine recipe proportions, not flavors. Sure, outside restrictions are bad, but limitations, whether imposed by an artist on himself or by the state, do not deter communication. Art is form, form is elastic. While remaining the same size and weight, form stretches itself grandiloquently to cheat censors. Censors anyway make less difference in art than in "life"—less difference to a novelist than to a journalist. For an artist pure freedom is dangerous, controls are good. But he must stay free to control his own controls.

Art does not grow from the collective tension of the left but from individual leisure. Sadly, our most liberal politicals are often the least culture-minded. Bella Abzug, for example, makes no statements on behalf of the arts, yet her district alone houses the most concentrated covey of first-rate creators this side of Paris in the '20s. God knows she's for man's rights, but only the jaded rich seem to have time for the art of artists as well as for their campaign support.

Political art? It's said military marches impel men into battle. Are there marches that impel them to turn and walk away?

The next year may overhaul our awareness of serious national music. Every American composer has been called on for the Bicentennial and the results will be heard, like it or not, for a long time, on programs large and small in even the hickest towns. Already this year we celebrate widely the 100th birthday of Charles Ives. Like Satie in France, our only musical primitive has become the most overrated of underrated composers, but his imposition on the general consciousness is wholesome. Except for Hemingway, greater America has always been a bit embarrassed by her high culture figures. Now with an Ives festival, a Whitman bridge and a Gershwin postage stamp, we are finally making a "thing" of artists rather than of generals. The thing results from the responsibility of growing up.

Despite how Europe still views us (as adolescent imitators, producers of, at most, Melville and Cole Porter), we start to view ourself intact. If, as the French would have it, we went from barbarism to decadence without an intervening civilization, our current afterlife, while it contaminates the globe on the one hand, on the other involuntarily, and slowly, slowly, sprinkles rich and fertile pollen.

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A Scene from an Unfinished Play

by Lillian Hellman

The living room of an old house. It is a good looking, comfortable room. Off the room to the right of the audience, we can see part of another room where the furniture has been pushed back as if for a party or for dancing.

At rise: Dr. Campion, a man in his middle sixties, is sitting in a chair, reading. He puts the book down, picks up another book from a pile of books next to him, puts that down, picks up a third book. After a minute, a boy of about eight comes in carrying school books.

Boy

Hello.

Campion

Hello.

(A girl of twelve follows the boy. She is very pretty.)

Girl

Hello.

Campion

Hello.

(A nurse, Miss Wylie, appears from door on left.)

Miss Wylie

The doctor's in the operating room. They didn't tell me that. I don't know what he's doing in the operating room.

Campion

Operating?

Miss Wylie

Now, Doctor, I am sure you know your son's not a surgeon. I can't find your wife, or Dr. Andy's wife, either. I don't know what to do. Wouldn't you like to go to your room? But which room is your room? You could go upstairs and then change later if you like. I can't even find the maids. It's Thursday.

Campion

Please don't disturb yourself.

LILLIAN HELLMAN *is the author of* The Children's Hour, Watch on the Rhine, The Little Foxes *and* Another Part of the Forest. *Her memoir,* An Unfinished Woman, *was published in 1969. Her latest book is* Pentimento, A Book of Portraits.

Boy

Hello.

(Eating his way out of the room.)

Campion

Hello.

Girl

Hello.

Miss Wylie

My God. Don't just say hello, both of you. This is your grandfather.

Boy

Hello.

Campion

Hello.

(Boy goes out. The girl stands staring at Campion.)

Miss Wylie

They didn't know you were coming. Say hello, Elizabeth. You're early. A whole week early. We've been alerted for April 10th, Dr. Campion. I'd very much like now to go and tell your wife that you are here. I can at least do that.

Campion

Please. Don't take upon yourself these problems. Go back to your office and your patients.

Miss Wylie

There aren't any today. This isn't office day. I don't know what to do with nobody at home.

(The girl comes forward.)

Girl

Hello.

Campion

Hello.

Miss Wylie

Elizabeth, where is your mother, do you know? Where is your grandmother? This is your grandfather. Grandfather.

Elizabeth

Goodbye.

Campion

Goodbye.

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Miss Wylie

Elizabeth!

Elizabeth

I don't know what to do. I don't know what you want me to do, Miss Wylie. What grandfather?

Miss Wylie

Your grandmother's husband.

Elizabeth

Well. Hello.

Campion

Hello.

(Elizabeth goes out.)

Miss Wylie

I'll just go try the hospital again. I really don't know what to do.

Campion

That's a good time for doing nothing.

Miss Wylie

That's all right for you to say, Dr. Campion, but I'm all alone with the responsibility of you.

Campion

Please don't feel that.

Miss Wylie

Well. You see. Your wife lives in the left wing. Now if you change your mind, just go on up the stairs and turn left.

Campion

I was born in this house.

Miss Wylie

But it's been changed. A new left wing was built for your wife, and then another one for the children, and there's a new garden, very beautiful, but it's raining now. I think I'll go tell—

(He does not answer as a girl appears carrying school books. She's about fifteen and plain looking. Her clothes and her hair make her look plainer. Miss Wylie motions to her.)

Go in please. Go in.

Girl

Good evening, sir.

Campion

Good evening.

Miss Wylie

I'm sure you talk French, Doctor. Annie talks nice French.

(Annie comes in and sits down. She waits for a minute and when she sees he doesn't look at her, she picks up a magazine.)

Campion

(After a minute.)

This used to be the library. Could you tell me where all the books have gone and why they were moved?

Annie

I don't know. I've only been here two months. But there's a library in the new wing.

Campion

Oh. People read there?

Annie

Well. They mostly have meetings. There was one last night.

Campion

Do you read much?

Annie

I used to. In the convent school I read a book a night.

Campion

Are you a nun?

Annie

(Laughs)

Oh, no. You ask that because I'm so plain looking. No. I'm not even a Catholic. I went to the school because it was a good school. Or so my mother thought.

Campion

Who is your mother? I am rather mixed up around here.

Annie

She's Mrs. Shendown now. But when I was born, she was married to my father. *(Smiles)* I mean she was married then to my father here, Dr. Andrew Campion.

Campion

(Turns to look at her.)

When I knew your mother she was not qualified to judge schools. Has she changed?

Annie

(Amused)

No, sir. But it was a good school, better than the one here.

Campion

Then I probably was wrong about your mother. I don't like to be wrong.

Annie

Well, you're not, really. It's just that things don't go in a straight line, do they, sir?

Campion

So your mother remarried?

Annie

Oh, yes. After my father to a writer who painted, and once to Mr. Shendown.

Campion

What does he do?

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Annie
He inherited some furniture.

Campion
And what's your father's new wife like? Well, not so new. Mary Campion?

Annie
(Has gotten up and gone to the piano.)
My piano teacher comes soon. You won't like listening to that. It isn't nice. Shall I show you the library? I mean not to disturb you, but I can't move the piano there.

Campion
What's she like? Mary Campion.

Annie
I don't know why I take lessons. I know just enough now to be bad and that's all I'll ever know.

Campion
I knew you when you were born. I'm your grandfather.

(Annie turns sharply.)

Annie
Goodness. I always thought I'd know you if I saw you. And now I haven't. I'm so sorry.
(She comes to him.)
How do you do?

Campion
How do you do?

Annie
What shall I do now?

Campion
I don't know. People are disturbed about small things, aren't they?

Annie
More in America than in the convent. Well. Goodbye, sir. I'll go tell the piano teacher she is to come another day. And then I'll have a bath—

Campion
I've made you nervous?

Annie
Yes, sir. I never met anybody famous before. Sister Marie-Margeretta, the science teacher, was the first one who told me you were a great man.

Campion
You miss your convent, don't you?

Annie
Oh, I like it here. I've made up my mind to like what has to be. I'm always going to be like that. There is nothing else for a plain girl to do. I'm sure you want to be alone now.

Campion
Why are you sure?

Annie
Because you are a great man. And the great always think by themselves, don't they?

Campion
I asked you what is your step-mother like?

Annie
I don't know what people are like, sir. I am almost always wrong. You've come from a long distance?

(He nods.)

Africa. Goodness. Years ago when Sister Marie-Margeretta said you were there, although she couldn't understand why you picked Africa, I looked it up and read about it. I spent so much time trying to picture it, that I didn't go walking for a whole winter. You have to go walking every day in the convent.

Campion
Did it affect your health?

Annie
Not at all.

Campion
Did you learn much from your reading?

Annie
No. I learn very slowly. That's why it's so hard for me here. All the young girls are so advanced. I'm not very.

Campion
You don't think yourself very anything?

Annie
(Smiles)
No.

Campion
I think you are very cheerful.

Annie
That's nice.

(A woman of about sixty-two comes into the room. She is Margaret Campion. She is thin. She is good-looking. Annie sees her immediately and moves away from her across the room. Campion sees Annie move and turns his head. Slowly, as if it is difficult, he rises. All the movements he makes are the movements of a man who does not feel well.)

Campion
Margaret.

Margaret
Miss Wylie came to tell me you were here. I was waiting for you to come to me.

Campion
I would have come.

Margaret
You didn't come.

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Campion
Certainly there can be no hurry after eighteen years.

Margaret
No. No hurry.

Campion
How are you, Margaret?

Margaret
I have tried to reach Andy but he is in the operating room. He cannot be called.

Campion
No need, certainly.

Margaret
And Mary is gone to their country place. She goes every Thursday, even in winter, to supervise—

Campion
They have a country place now. Medicine pays well for Andy.

Margaret
Very, very well. He is called for consultations to Washington, to New York, to Boston. He's had a most distinguished career.

Campion
Yes, Margaret.

Margaret
You were not expected until next week.

(When there is no answer)

How is India?

Campion
I don't know. I was in Africa.

Margaret
How is Africa?

Campion
I don't know how to answer that.

Margaret
You speak exactly as you always did. You haven't changed.

Campion
I've tried to. Have you changed?

Margaret
I've grown old.

Campion
You look very well indeed.

Margaret
You still read at very strange times. There are things for us to say to each other.

(She turns to Annie)

Please run along, Annie.

Campion
(To Annie)
No need. Come and sit by me.

(To Margaret)
We have nothing new to say, Margaret.

(Annie smiles at him, backs out of the room going through the party room, where she sits quietly against the wall.)

Margaret
There's nothing for us to say to each other after eighteen years?

Campion
I will not be here long, Margaret. Let me be myself, you be yourself. *(Laughs)* And we'll pray to God.

Margaret
Andy will be upset that you arrived without being met by the welcoming committee. Many other people will be upset. There's to be a dinner on the 14th. Everybody worth anything in town. The University ceremony will be the next day, and then the Scientist's dinner. Many articles have been written, Sam. Andy's been very busy. He's done nothing else for months but plan about you and confer. There's even a TV program.

Campion
(Laughs)
Oh, no. Oh, no. Oh, no. I have come home, come here, to sort my papers, get some things, nothing else.

Margaret
And the operation has been arranged for the 18th. Tillman will operate and Dr. Moore from Johns Hopkins has asked to assist. Andy says nothing like that has ever happened before. And Goldman, of course, will come from New York.

(Campion moves toward her, then steps back.)

Campion
On whom are they operating?

Margaret
Sam, we've all been terribly worried. Andy has been almost sick since he heard the news. I've even agreed to their asking Jean to come to the ceremonies and to attend the honors for you—

Campion
What ceremonies? What honors? What operation?

Margaret
We were all moved that you came home to us now that you're ill, Sam. Andy has been terribly concerned. And I, Sam. Even I.

Campion
I didn't come home to die, nor will I die here, Margaret. I came home to sort my papers and then I will go away

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in a few days. That is all.

(Andrew Campion, a man of about thirty-eight or forty appears in the door. Campion does not see him.)

Tell Andy there will be no honors, no dinners, no television program and no operation.

Andrew
(In the doorway)

Father.

Campion
(Turns)

Andrew.

Andrew

This is not the way I wanted it. After so many years. For weeks I've stayed awake, seeing you come out of the plane, seeing myself waiting, hoping to say the right thing, and to hear it, too. Like a boy again, waiting for you.

Campion

You look well, Andy.

Andrew

Hoping to say the right thing. For once.

Campion

Things don't always go according to plans. Just as well. Don't dream about me, son. I'm the same man.

Andrew

No. You are not the same man. I will say it, before I meant to say it. You are a sick man, and I'm happy you've come home to us.

Campion

I'm sorry that you've had the news. That popinjay in Paris is a meddler.

Andrew

You couldn't expect to see a doctor in Paris and not have it known here, after eighteen years. You are a famous man and news comes out even from Africa—

Campion
(Smiles)

I know. I saw the newspaper story. Romantic, I sounded. Like a fool.

Andrew

Shall I take your bags up?

Campion

Thank you. Is it convenient for me to be here? Will your wife—

Andrew

Father. What kind of question is that? We've done nothing since your letter came but make plans and have hopes—

Campion

I've heard. Don't have plans, Andy. I am only here for a few days. And then I'll be gone.

Andrew

Father, the operation is absolutely necessary. I've arranged—

Campion

There will be no operation. And no talk about it. I will see you later. My respects to your wife.

(He starts out.)

Andrew

You can't mean what you say. The operation is absolutely necessary.

Campion

I know. But not necessary to me.

Margaret

Your son loves you. He wishes to take care of you. Do you know that? Have you ever known it?

Andrew

Please, Mother—

Margaret

Your father is saying that he refuses you. Refuses your good and kind plans, made only in his interest. Refuses the love and care you wish to give him—

Campion

And the publicity that could do him so much good. Yes, I refuse it. You and Moore and that fat fool from New York. The honors were to come before the operation, to make sure I was still alive to receive them? Pictures of us, the old eccentric come home, his son and his saviors on the platform.

Andrew

Father. It is not true what you say—

Campion

No, not altogether. Nothing is true altogether. Nor does it matter. If I didn't have other plans, you'd be welcome to your picture in a magazine. But I don't wish to die here.

Margaret

Where do you plan it?

Campion

Not with any of you.

(To Andrew)

My papers are here, it's why I came back. That is all there will be.

Margaret

This house belongs to you.

Campion

Yes, the house belongs to me. Remember that for the next few days.

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Reconsideration

Yesterday's Burdens
by Robert M. Coates

(Southern Illinois University Press; $7.95)

Books are like babies launched on the Nile in little arks of bullrushes daubed with slime and pitch. Most of the arks soon let the water in. The sturdiest books or babes outlast their vessels, but only a few have the good luck to be found on the bank by Pharaoh's daughters. Often a bookman wonders what would happen if others were rescued and launched again, each in a new ark.

Southern Illinois University Press is now conducting that laudable experiment in the form of a series called "Lost American Fiction," edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli. This fall three new titles are being added to the series: they are *The Cubical City*, Janet Flanner's only novel, first published in 1926; *Predestined*, by Stephen French Whitman, a naturalistic novel (1910) that Scott Fitzgerald admired; and *The Devil's Hand*, by Edith Summers Kelley, which had remained in manuscript for nearly half a century. The price of each is $8.95. Of the three I have read only the last, and I found it rather disappointing after Kelley's other novel, *Weeds* (1923), with which the series began auspiciously. *The Devil's Hand* is the honest, artless story of two young women trying to live as ranchers in the Imperial Valley, and its chief value is that of an authentic document.

I could wish that the series, in the future, would pay somewhat less attention to cultural history and more to literary talent. Janet Flanner is a move in that direction. Some truly neglected authors who wrote brilliantly are Dawn Powell, Leane Zugsmith, Josephine Herbst, Nathan Asch—the editor plans to include a book of his—and Slater Brown, whose one novel, *The Burning Wheel* (1942), was launched in an ark that foundered. But my present subject is another novelist in the same category, the most original of them all, Robert M. Coates and his book, *Yesterday's Burdens*.

I first met Coates in Paris, 1922, and I was his friend, sometimes his neighbor, for more than 50 years. But did I really know him? Open to friendship as he seemed to be, always ready to explain himself, there was in him something inaccessible. It was as if, in his travels through the world, he carried with him an unwindowed room into which he sometimes retired, and locked the door.

I am still puzzled by contradictions in his character and in his writing. *Item* (to start a list of these), he was both solitary and gregarious. He loved boisterous parties and raffish companions, but I suspect that he was happiest when alone. *Item*, he was romantic by disposition, almost nympholeptic, dreaming for years of an impossibly beautiful woman in gray for whom he would eagerly sacrifice his future, but he was also a realist who worked, paid his debts, and had a hard observing eye for objects. *Item*, he was a city man who fled to the country, where he lived in tune with the earth and in time with the seasons, as one learns from the lovely first section of *Yesterday's Burdens*, but from time to time he fled back to the city and roamed the streets from Harlem to the Battery. And a final item: in spite of his boyhood travels over the country and his five apprentice years in Paris, he remained in some ways a Connecticut Yankee like his father. I think of him as a craftsman, an inspired mechanic working with words as his father had worked with pieces of metal, choosing and calibrating, fitting together, then grinding and polishing in the hope of achieving some ultimate invention. Each work he produced was die-stamped with his trademark.

Among Coates' 12 books, *Yesterday's Burdens* has always been my favorite. It contains more of himself than the others: more of his contradictions, more of his inventiveness, more of his nympholepsy, more of his double feeling for city streets and the deep country. It is also a completed act rather than a mere novel. In the end it impresses me as a sort of leave-taking, almost a symbolic suicide.

One should read again a passage in the original edition, in which the author sets forth his program. "But let me tell you about this book I'm trying to write," he says, "in between bouts of book reviewing":

> *It's a novel, or rather a novel about a novel, or perhaps one might rather describe it as a long essay discussing a novel that I might possibly write, with fragments of the narrative inserted here and there, by way of illustration or example.*
>
> *Or—again one might say—the attempt is to make it as nearly as possible a true example of the roman vécu. Nothing in it that I myself have not seen, heard, felt—or seen or felt in some other so vividly as almost to make the experience my own.*
>
> *The plot, of course, is the difficulty. You know my idea about plots—pick a good lively one and then forget about it. In this case, though, I don't think that formula would work. I have this young man, Henderson, and the problem would seem to be to take him to the city and there lose him, as thoroughly as possible. Or at least to reverse the usual method, and instead of trying to individualize him and pin him down to a story, to generalize more and more about him—to let him become like the figures in a crowd, and the crowd dispersing.*
>
> *But isn't that, after all, the authentic thing—the thing that happens to all of us nowadays, and to all our friends?*

"This book I'm trying to write" is *Yesterday's Burdens*—of course, of course—and its author is like a conjurer laying his cards face up on the table. He has every right to be confident that there are enough tricks up his sleeve to keep the audience amazed. One trick among others is this: Henderson is so thoroughly lost in the city that his story can be given three possible endings. He will be 1) reconciled with his wife, who has come back from Paris unseduced and without a divorce, or 2) shot and killed by his lover's husband, or 3) left alone despondent—jobless probably—and will jump to his death from a high window. Coates inclines toward the third ending, but without quite making up his mind. "I never saw him again," he repeats on the last page, as if throwing up his hands.

Meanwhile the conjurer is palming another card, or item of information. He does not tell the reader, but does allow him to guess, that "this young man, Henderson"—at least in one of his aspects—is the author himself. In another aspect, the social one, Henderson is vaguely connected with James Thurber (or so Coates told his wife many years later). The connection with Coates

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himself is better documented in the story. Henderson is given Coates' birthday, April 6, his red hair, some of what we recognize from other books as his boyhood memories, and also, clearly, the group of his Village friends. He impresses us as being one side of Coates' past, and also what Coates might have become if he had chosen to stay in New York and earn a big income instead of escaping to a country house without running water. That is why one thinks of the book as a symbolic or vicarious suicide. In making Henderson a scapegoat burdened with the author's sins (or what he had come to regard as sins)—in letting him vanish into the crowd (and the crowd dispersing)—Coates is abolishing part of himself while hoping, one strongly feels, to be reborn into a different future.

Coates thought that *Yesterday's Burdens* was an ideal title for such a work, though his publisher didn't agree. His publisher was the Macaulay Company, a small house that specialized in mildly salacious novels and ghosted autobiographies. Lee Furman, the head of the house—we called him "Mr. Macaulay"—had been persuaded by Coates' friend Matthew Josephson to add a few avant-garde authors to his list. He thought they would lend it distinction, and also he had a wistful idea that he could sell their books if they were attractively priced and labeled. Mr. Macaulay believed in the magic of titles. "Let's have a big novel written to order," he told an editorial meeting, "and let's give it a tremendous title—you know, something that will make people think of *The Good Earth* or *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Any bright ideas?" Of course someone suggested "The Bad Earth." "Or," Isidor Schneider said—he was the poet who served as advertising manager—"what about 'All Noisy on the Eastern Behind'?"

Mr. Macaulay was distressed by Coates' title. "This year," he told the author (it was 1933), "nobody wants to hear about yesterday's burdens or any other burdens. Can't you find something upbeat and catchy?" Coates stammered a little, as always, but insisted on his downbeat title, and Mr. Macaulay accepted it, though with misgivings that he must have passed on to his salesmen. He was an amiable businessman on the edge of failure, and he hated arguments. Perhaps he was right about the mood of the time, or perhaps he made himself right by giving the book no advance promotion. It had some appreciative reviews, including one I wrote for *The New Republic* (Feb. 7, 1934) but, on the whole, it attracted little attention in a year when critics were arguing about proletarian literature. Like *Miss Lonelyhearts*, also published in 1933—and also dismissed as being "of the 1920s," a period then held in low esteem—it became an example of the good book that some people talked about, but almost nobody bought. It is my impression that most of the first and only printing was sold cheaply as overstock. Two years later the Macaulay Company went out of business—not because of *Yesterday's Burdens*—and the book was quietly interred. My tardily written review might have been the tribute spoken over a grave.

I had praised the book, but not nearly enough—so it seems to me now—and chiefly for the feeling it conveyed of a given social caste in a given year. The caste was the one to which Henderson belonged, the new caste composed of bright young people who had flocked to Manhattan and prospered there. "As American business entered the boom era," I wrote, "it needed more and more propagandists to help in the increasingly difficult task of selling more com-

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modities each year to families that were given no higher wages to buy them with, and therefore had to be tempted with all the devices of art, literature and science into bartering their future earnings for an automobile or a bedroom suite. Business needed public relations counselors, it needed advertising artists and copywriters, it needed romancers to fill the pages of magazines in which its products were advertised, and illustrators to make the romance visible (and psychologists to explain how the whole process could be intensified); it needed stylists, designers, editors"; and I went on to say that in the boom years it conferred high rewards on not a few of these. There was a time when the bright young people, as a caste, regarded New York as a yearlong party given strictly for themselves. But their mood, as I observed and shared it, was changing even before the Crash, and many or most of them had come to be painfully dissatisfied with their lives.

The Crash is not mentioned in Coates' novel, though it can be sensed there as an undertone. As for the "given year" depicted, it is obviously not the year before the novel was published, considering that the narrator goes rambling through Manhattan without seeing breadlines or boarded-up stores. Coates was a slow writer who liked to mull over his impressions before setting them down, and the time of his story could only be 1930, the strange year that followed the Crash and served as an epilogue to the Boom. Hardly anything had changed on the surface of Henderson's world. Jobs could still be found in New York (or at least held on to); there were as many parties as ever (though more often with glum or violent sequels in the early-morning hours); and meanwhile everything was imperceptibly going to pieces. Like Henderson, one cannot help saying.

It was in 1930 that Coates took flight into the Connecticut countryside, into a farming community already invaded by others whom Henderson might have known. Few of the others made the same effort to put down new roots. Coates says of the invasion in one of the many passages that convey the feeling of the year, but this time in country terms:

On all sides one sees writers, painters, fashion designers buying acres of tillable land or pasture and dedicating them to the cultivation of sumac, goldenrod and blackberry brambles. Is it for revenge? The artist's tendencies, it would seem, are always atavistic: he would raze cities, he would remake New England into a wilderness. But what of the land itself?

I sometimes feel a strange uneasiness: the trees look hostile, the very grass seems to regard me with a venomous air. I have bought these fields and doomed them to sterility. Can you tell me if there is anything in common law concerning the rights of the soil to expect careful husbandry on the part of its owner? —

Those incantatory lines were written about an early stage of the invasion; sumac and goldenrod have now given way to second-growth forest. The New England countryside has changed as definitely as New York City, and much of it—in areas between the new housing developments—has indeed become a wilderness crisscrossed with stone fences. Not a few books of the 1970s deal with efforts to reclaim portions of that wilderness for grazing or tillage, and they are echoes, as it were, of Coates' feeling about the soil.

In that respect and others—notably in the cards-on-the-table attitude revealed toward the art of fiction—*Yesterday's Burdens* has a prophetic quality, and this helps to explain why I admire it more today than when I reviewed it 40 years ago. I had discussed it then as a sort of contemporary history, as a subjective but accurate picture of a social order just on the point of being destroyed, or self-destroyed. Now it seems to me that the special point in time has been so faithfully depicted, in a novel so full of inventions and yet so solidly put together, that the moment itself might have been cast in metal. It seems to me too that *Yesterday's Burdens* is part of our heritage, not one of the major texts, but still a lasting book and, in its quiet way, essential.

Malcolm Cowley

MALCOLM COWLEY *is the distinguished American critic who was associate editor of this journal from 1929 to 1944. This essay in somewhat different form will appear as the afterword in the new edition of* Yesterday's Burdens, *to be published in the spring.*

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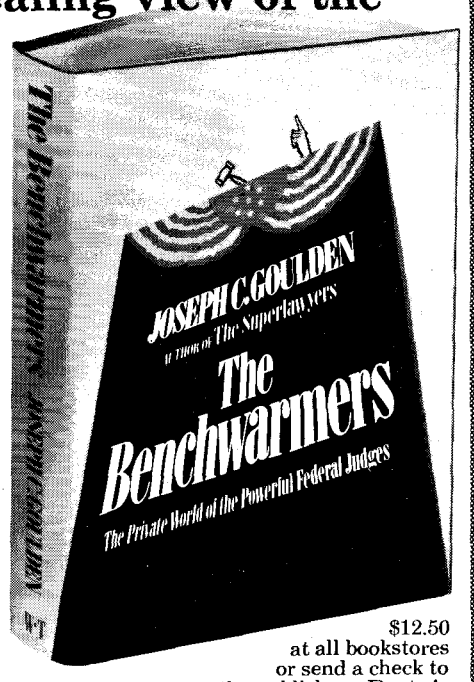

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A Colossal Ornament?

Jericho: The South Beheld
by Hubert Shuptrine and James Dickey

(Oxmoor House; $39.95, $60 after December 31)

A publisher's representative who travels the South dropped in the other day for a chat, in the course of which I asked him how the book business looked in the South this economically dispirited autumn. It was, he replied, too early to tell. But, he added, there was one book that seemed to be selling everywhere he went—"that big thing that James Dickey worked on."

"Big" is scarcely the word for *Jericho*, for which Dickey wrote the text and Hubert Shuptrine did the paintings and drawings. Put it on a coffee table, and there may be no room left for the mint juleps and pickled okra; it measures 12½ by 16 inches and weighs a lap-numbing seven pounds. Oxmoor House (an offshoot of the phenomenally successful *Progressive Farmer* and *Southern Living* magazines) put out a staggering first printing of 150,000 numbered copies. (My copy is number 75,012, which somehow diminishes the thrill of ownership.) According to a notably hyperbolic press release, "Manufacture of these unusually large art books required 150 tons of binder's board, 28 carloads (one million pounds) of paper, and 31 miles of cloth."

All of which adds up to a lot of trees and money: if the first printing is sold out at the pre-Christmas price, Oxmoor House stands to gross almost six million dollars. That, suh, is what I call whistling "Dixie."

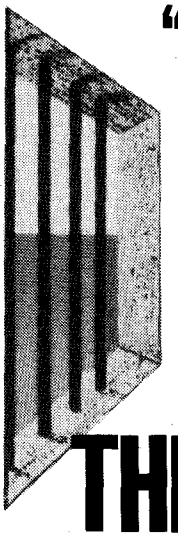
But is it, if you will pardon the question, art? Is it literature? Is it, indeed, anything more than a colossal ornament, a "gift book" to top all others in the genre?

I fear not. *Jericho* is vastly more interesting as a production than as a book. Shuptrine's paintings, though certainly attractive enough, look like nothing so much as the work of a member of the Southern branch of the Wyeth family; they are skillful, but they are also imitative and sentimental. As for Dickey's text, it rolls like the river Jordan, a flood of language in which the unwary reader may drown; wading through it, I kept thinking (or hoping) that Dickey was indulging in a huge put-on, serving up "Dixie" with a vengeance.

For if there is anything to explain the appeal this book evidently holds for a considerable number of Southerners, it is that it tells them all the things they want to hear. Dickey claims that he and Shuptrine seek to achieve a tone "near to Biblical intensity," but if there's gospel in this book it's The Gospel According to *Southern Living*—a publication that has devised a successful formula involving regional cheerleading, quaint stories about the old times there that are not forgotten, travelogues and recipes. It is the South sanitized and idealized, the same South that Dickey and Shuptrine offer us.

Their argument, in words and pictures, is that the South is Jericho, of which the captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, ". . . the place whereon thou standest is holy." Does anybody think that a single member of the Wednesday Afternoon Lecture, Tea-Sipping and Back-Patting Club is going to argue with *that*? No, *Jericho* is a book for regional chauvinists to wallow in, sliding happily around in the red-clay murk of Dickey's prose:

> *As Hubert and I have tried to show and say, there most truly is a locality on what the astronauts call the Blue Planet that we in turn by common consent call the South. It is possible to receive it and to give one's Self to it until it becomes a vision, and of a particular kind, as all visions must be particular. It is truth enough for mortal creatures that landscapes, seascapes, mountains, rivers and people can quite literally flow in the blood. These things are our significance, and will stay with us as possessions if we deeply open up to them. You, reader, must open up until you reach the point—it is a mystical point, attained by different people in different ways—of sensing your locality pour into you simultaneously through every sense as though it were being made available by a god, coming deeper and deeper through the eye, more memorably, more loud and soft through the ear, more almost unbearably through*



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the skin even though it may be only air, more strange and quirky through the nose, more delicious or ugly on the tongue, more in the blood, more in the memory, more in the life.

For my money, that's literary glossolalia.

Now, I decline to defer to anyone for my love of the South: its people, its places, its air, its tormented and peculiarly redeeming history. In fact I plead guilty to having written more than a few pieces asserting that the South offers possibilities for decent living and human community that have largely escaped the rest of the nation, and I stick by them.

But it's one thing to love the South, and another thing to love a South that doesn't exist. *Jericho* conveniently celebrates those aspects of the South that affirm its vision, and ignores those that do not. It serves us ample helpings of folk tales, good-natured country shenanigans, communion with nature and camellias; it neglects to mention that those delicacies are not so easily come by in today's South, separated as they are by miles of interstate highways, ribbons of motels and fast-food joints, sprawls of ticky-tacky suburbs and splotches of used-car lots.

Jericho is going to make a lot of Southerners happy, but mostly for the wrong reasons. It permits them to see themselves and their society through rose-colored glasses, which may be a marvelous form of self-scrutiny but which scants truth. Perhaps it can be argued that Southerners have always looked at themselves that way, whether in good times or bad, but precedent doesn't excuse *Jericho*.

And if anyone doubts that *Jericho* is *Southern Living* between hard covers, turn to page 117. There, no kidding, you will find recipes for black-eyed peas with ham hock, fried okra, country cornbread and sweet potato pie. If you want to learn how to make grits and red-eye gravy, you'll just have to subscribe to the magazine.

Jonathan Yardley

JONATHAN YARDLEY *is book editor of* The Miami Herald.

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Old-Style History

The Civil War A Narrative: Red River to Appomattox by Shelby Foote

(Random House; $20)

When novelist Shelby Foote first began work on his narrative history of the American Civil War, there were still six years to go before the centennial observance of the war was scheduled to begin. In publishing circles the boom market was on for Civil War books. Bruce Catton was in command of the field with his vividly written trilogy on the Army of the Potomac, and all over the land, historians both professional and amateur were preparing to contribute to the great bonanza. Wartime diaries, journals, memoirs were being assiduously edited and annotated. Entrepreneurs such as Ralph Newman were stocking up wares for the book-fest. Meanwhile the associated travel promoters of the states in which the battles had been fought were laying plans to collect the financial harvest from battlefield reenactments, pageants and other tourist-luring observances. It was going to be a great show.

But the centennial never developed in quite the way that was expected. For one thing, the book market crested too far in advance. By the year 1961, when the actual centennial began, readers were already wearying of encountering the same stories about the same battles and the same commanders, told over and over again in only slightly different accents. Too much shoddy work, too many contrived "non-books" operated to drive out the good books.

Then the centennial itself was abruptly upstaged by the civil rights movement. In order to take proper satisfaction in the reenactment of a war that had been fought years earlier, one had to be able to feel that it was truly past history, and that the antipathies and injustices that had caused the fighting were gone, and only the recollection of heroism and valor was now important. But when one realized only too well that the passions that had been inflamed into civil war were still alive, if no longer on quite the same sectional basis, it was difficult to contemplate the blood-letting of a century ago with anything like the requisite antiquarian detachment. How celebrate a war in which some 600,000 persons died, when before one's very eyes, in the daily newspapers, there was so much testimony that the underlying causes of the strife were not yet laid to rest? Thus the centennial, all told, so far as its reenactment went, was mostly a bust.

It is Shelby Foote's good fortune, I think, that his narrative of the fighting of the American Civil War was not finished and published during or immediately following the years of the centennial, but comes to completion only now, when it can be read for the majestic work of history that it is. For essentially it is different from most of the other Civil War books—and perhaps the circumstance that the first two volumes were published in 1958 and 1963, respectively, may account for the fact that, however they were well received and widely praised, the originality was not properly recognized. Now that Volume III, *Red River to Appomatox*, is ready and the long-time project is complete, it may be that some will go back and reread Volumes I and II as well, and thus be able to discern something of Foote's full achievement.

His is not the vicarious refighting of battles in print, though these are well chronicled and vividly described. Neither is his work a ranking and rating of the various commanders, though their individual capabilities come through clearly and unarguably. Nor, finally, is it an attempt to fasten upon the strategic mistakes and advertise the missed tactical opportunities, *i.e., if* only the Confederates had followed up First Manassas, *if* McClellan had stayed in place and pressed on toward Richmond after the Seven Days, *if* Beauregard had continued the assault after the initial rout at Shiloh, *if* Meade had struck Lee's beaten army before it could recross the Potomac and so on. The material for such second-guessing is there, and lost opportunities are identified, but they are not what Foote has been after.

What he has written instead is a disenthralled narrative of just how the war was fought out, from beginning to conclusion. He has sought to show what happened, to describe the way that the commanders on both sides planned their campaigns and fought their battles. This is old-style history; Foote's models have been Tacitus and Gibbon. Written with flowing style and unfolding narrative art, drawing upon massive research but with all material

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thoroughly incorporated and placed in the service of his narrative, he has told the story of the war.

This volume begins with the appointment of U. S. Grant as chief of all the Union armies in the late winter of 1864, and follows the war through Grant's onslaught against Lee that spring and summer, Sherman's move southward against Joe Johnston, the replacement of Johnston with Hood and the subsequent destruction of the Confederate army in the west, the besieging of Petersburg, the march of Sherman's troops through Georgia and the Carolinas, the final dislodgement of Lee's army from the Petersburg defenses, and the subsequent surrenders.

As always Foote gives devoted attention to the characters and personalities of the principal figures—the two opposing chief executives, Lincoln and Davis; Lee and Grant; Sherman and Johnston; Forrest, Hood, Sheridan, Thomas, Farragut. As in his first two volumes, what is striking is Foote's almost complete emancipation from the partisan evaluations of these figures that have been handed down, unconsciously for the most part, from generation to generation by subsequent historians. Because the South lost the war despite the battlefield achievements of its soldiers, the civil government, and in particular Jefferson Davis, was in effect made into scapegoat and explanation. Had Davis been wiser and less inflexible, the war would have turned out otherwise. But Foote's Jefferson Davis is an able and resourceful man, who did well for a cause doomed to defeat by overwhelming military and industrial force. Foote is not out to find scapegoats, but to tell what happened.

I know of no other military historian of the Civil War who has written with so much objectivity and freedom from inherited partisanship. The late Douglas Southall Freeman, for example, for all his matchless skill at research and his ability to piece together what actually took place on confused battlefields, inherited some of the loyalties and biases of the postwar generation. His handling of Gen. James Longstreet was thoroughly colored by the detestation of that general felt by most white Southerners because of Longstreet's having turned Republican after the surrender. Foote by contrast views Longstreet's performance in terms of what the wartime records show, and we get a completely different and far more reasonable depiction. But not a verdict—Mr. Foote is not in that business. He is not identifying heroes and villains, but describing a bloody war.

The best section of *Red River to Appomatox*, surpassing even the account of the Fort Donelson campaign in Volume I, is Foote's depiction of the Wilderness campaign. I have never read a better, more vivid, more understandable account of the savage battling between Grant's and Lee's armies that began on the Rapidan in May of 1864 and ended 40 days later at Cold Harbor. It is a model of what military history can be.

But for that matter, so is the entire book—all three volumes, the finest writing to have come out of the centennial. Foote stays with the human strife and suffering, and unlike most Southern commentators, he does not take sides. In objectivity, in range, in mastery of detail, in beauty of language and feeling for the people involved, this work surpasses anything else on the subject. Written in the tradition of the great historian-artists—Gibbon, Prescott, Napier, Freeman—it stands alongside the work of the best of them.

Louis D. Rubin, Jr.

LOUIS D. RUBIN's *most recent book is* The Writer in the South *(University of Georgia Press).*

Inside Out

The Male Machine
by Marc Feigen Fasteau
(McGraw-Hill; $8.95)

Several years ago a friend of mine worked at the San Francisco headquarters of the Bank of America. He left his job, feeling depressed and inadequate: all the men he worked with seemed competitive and aggressive; he alone was hesitant and unsure of himself. Shortly afterward he began spending his evenings doing volunteer work at an organization called Suicide Prevention. Answering a "hotline" telephone there, he was astonished to receive, in the course of several weeks, two calls from men whose voices he recognized from the bank.

Marc Feigen Fasteau's *The Male Machine* is about this duality in American men: the tough, confident exterior that is supposed to constitute masculinity, and the fears that lie beneath it. It is an important subject, too little discussed. Thus far most writing inspired by the women's movement has been about the ways men discriminate against women, not about the emotional shackles they put on themselves. Fasteau, an attorney active in feminist causes, discusses how American child-raising, schooling, sports, myths about violence, and business and family traditions produce a standard of what is "male."

The picture is not a new one, but Fasteau's description is thorough: he traces the imagery of toughness and "personal muteness" in emotional matters through all our mythological heroes, from the silent cowboy to James Bond, and shows its effects in male patterns of argument and conversation, in the way men are expected to be gruff at times of emotion, in the imagery of toughness/weakness in debates over Vietnam, and even in professional initiation rituals such as the absurdly long hours worked by young corporation lawyers or medical interns. No American man can read the book without, uncomfortably, seeing parts of himself described.

The Male Machine has several serious blind spots, however. They parallel blind spots in the women's movement. One has to do with class. When Fasteau gives specific examples of emotionally repressed men, they are almost always of businessmen, lawyers and college

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students. Behind his writing is an unspoken and perhaps unconscious assumption that he is speaking largely about and to well-to-do professionals. He mentions that "good household help is not always available" while talking about the problems of men adjusting to their wives working. Although his quotations from the *Harvard Business Review* and elsewhere are intriguing, he never discusses how the image of masculinity is different—and I believe it is sometimes profoundly different—for American men who are poor or black.

Related to this is another omission. Although Fasteau talks of men's "market values," and once says, "There is no set of beliefs that allows men to value themselves without regard to the market place," he never confronts the question: can we eliminate market values without eliminating the market place? Is it possible for American men to be gentle, feeling, open about their "softness," when they must daily go to work in a society where income levels are highly stratified, where unemployment is rising sharply, and where the job-seeker or businessman who is aggressively competitive often *does* come out ahead? The role of American men is rooted in our own particular brand of capitalism; you can't talk adequately about the one without talking about the other. The salesman who forces himself to project an upbeat self-confidence all day in order to outsell a competitor, and who knows he may be out of a job if he loses the competition, simply cannot conform to Fasteau's ideal of the androgynous man who is open about his emotions and his vulnerabilities. If he does, he fails.

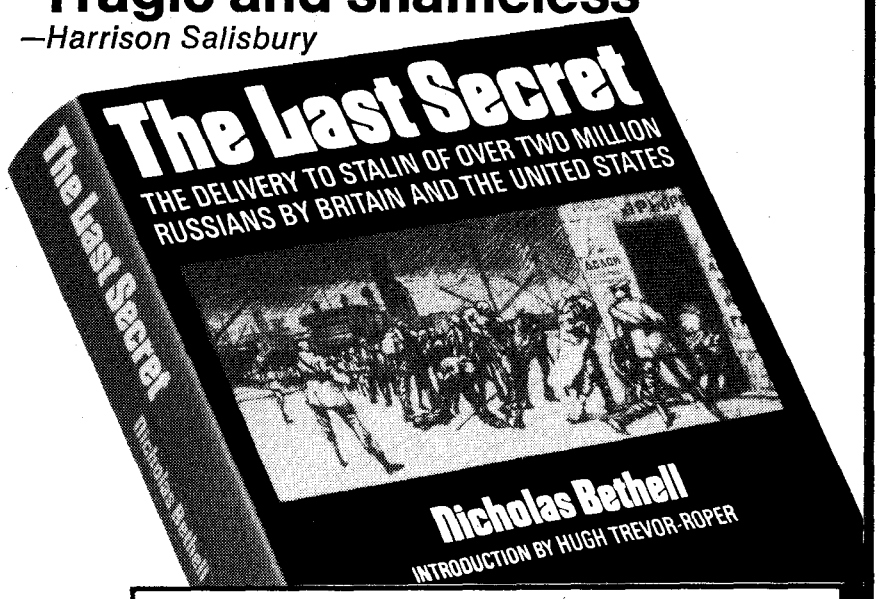
Fasteau's vision of a society where men are no longer emotionally straitjacketed is good, and described with considerable feeling. But to him it is a psychological problem, to be solved largely within families: "The family, of course, is the most critical factor in the development of the individual." Except for a passing reference to a General Foods plant that replaced an assembly line with worker teams, he does not acknowledge that any deep changes in our economic system or social distribution of power may be needed to bring his ideal to reality.

What economic changes lie behind the new interest in redefining the male role? In part, I think, it is an outgrowth of the stabilization of huge corporate bureaucracies, whose psychological effects William H. Whyte began to trace in *The Organization Man*. The getting-along-with-people skills needed to do well in the modern corporation or university or government agency are different from the skills needed by a small shopowner. Hence the interest by big companies in "sensitivity training" for their executives. The encounter group is gradually replacing Dale Carnegie; the emotionally attuned personnel manager is replacing the hard-driving entrepreneur. Theorists of the men's liberation movement, like those of the new therapies, would do well to keep this perspective in mind. Otherwise the liberation they are proposing—and it is one of great promise—can too easily become merely a means for an unjust society to function more efficiently, rather than to become more just.

Adam Hochschild

ADAM HOCHSCHILD *is a free-lance writer living in Berkeley, California.*

"Tragic and shameless"
—Harrison Salisbury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Fine Print

Allen Tate, at 75, at Sewanee

Doris Grumbach

Monroe K. Spears has written of the dead poet Auden (in *Sewanee Review* this fall) that he was "a great civilizing and humanizing force." Last week a happy few poets, college professors, novelists, scholars and friends gathered at the University of the South, familiarly called by virtue of its location Sewanee (Tenn.) or more familiarly, Swanee, to celebrate the 75th birthday of Allen Tate. Of him also can it be said, fortunately while he is still alive, that he has had a civilizing and humanizing effect on American letters. I felt lucky to be present on this warm, affectionate, private occasion, as a come-lately representative of a journal with which Tate once (in the 1920s) had a connection as a book reviewer and occasionally, signing himself "An Observer," as a letter-writer.

Tate belonged to, indeed was a leader of, the movement in American letters called first by the name of its briefly

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lived publication *The Fugitive* and then by one of its major tenets, the Agrarians. The full force, the fine, lofty passion of the Fugitive-Agrarian movement, which started when its members were together at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, is of course no longer felt, has not been for some time. Together with Donald Davidson, John Crowe Ransom, Robert Penn Warren and others, the group opposed "science" and the industrial nature of America. They had a strong affinity for the best in the Southern tradition, for religion ("our submission to the general intention of a nature that is fairly inscrutable," wrote Tate), mannerliness, individualism, stability. They saw the values of an agrarian society: "the culture of the soil is the best and the most sensitive of vocations." Tate felt the need to be part of "a literary order," thought the role of the genuine man of letters to be centered in a "responsible" exercise of his humane art. For him civilization was rooted in "family, blood-kinship, clanship, folkways, custom, community."

The Fugitive-Agrarian movement was a return to what Ransom called (in the group's historic declaration of principles, *I'll Take My Stand*, 1930) an "antique conservatism." To outsiders, especially in the North, it seemed a somewhat romantic yearning for a leisurely, aristocratic existence based upon European principles of culture, opposed to the American gospel of the work ethic, of progress through materialism. But this was a simplification. The Agrarians were never uncritical of the old South, were certainly at first in conscious flight from what they considered the cultural failures of the South. Ultimately the group, which expanded to include sympathizers like Stark Young, Francis Ferguson, John Gould Fletcher, Andrew Lytle and many others, became a cultural force, not so much through manifestos as through the work they produced: finely wrought, "strict," textured, often complex poetry, fiction (Tate's only novel was *The Fathers*) and literary criticism, called formalist or "new," of a very high order.

Tate attended only the dinner session of his celebration. I watched him as he sat at the head of the gathering of notables, his large, bony, intelligent head, his small, frail body. He responded to the poetic tributes read to him or brought to him by other poets—Howard Nemerov, William Meredith, Richard Howard, William Jay Smith, Radcliffe Squires, I. A. Richards (a tribute-poem read by Howard and printed last week in London's *TLS*)—with his own typically wry poetry. He was absent from the reading of papers written for the occasion by Irish critic Denis Donoghue, Yale's Cleanth Brooks, Walter Sullivan of Vanderbilt, and Louis Rubin, Jr. of Chapel Hill. I had the feeling that even if his health had been good, the impish, tart, loftily self-deprecating old chap would not have come to hear all the critical acclaim of himself.

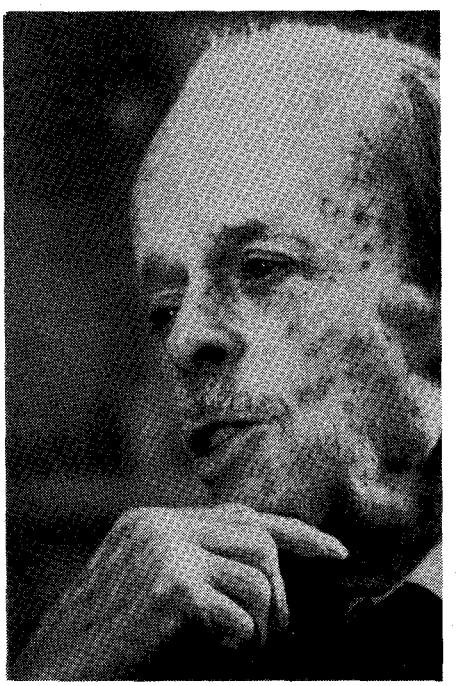

Photo by Jim Tuten

His influence has been strong and enduring on the lives of his students, his friends, young writers who came to him for advice and help. Hart Crane spent a notable winter with Tate and his wife Carolyn Gordon in their rented cold farmhouse in Patterson, New York in 1925. Young Robert Lowell once tented on Tate's front lawn in Clarksville, Tennessee for months. Ford Madox Ford, Van Wyck Brooks, Malcolm Cowley, Kenneth Burke, were his friends. He knew T. S. Eliot well enough to visit him several times. His activities were unusually varied: he was a teacher, an editor, lecturer, letter-writer extraordinary, critic and novelist, biographer (of Stonewall Jackson and Jefferson Davis) and poet. His "Ode to the Confederate Dead," perhaps the best known of his many superb lyrics, was itself the subject of scholar-critic Louis Rubin's paper. *Reactionary Essays on Poetry and Ideas*, an important book for the history of thought in America, was published in 1936; from then on, Tate was spoken of as a man of letters because, as he himself wrote, "under the discipline of letters the mind is free."

Tate now lives in retirement on the outskirts of the Sewanee campus with his second wife Helen and their two small children. The campus is on the top of a mountain, it is huge and old; its fine rolling fields and Gothic-style stone buildings, its respectful students (who still wear jackets and ties or skirts to class; distinguished students are permitted the honor of wearing academic gowns on the campus) and decorous, easy-mannered faculty suggest to the hasty eye and ear a place where the appearance of leisurely, orderly, contemplative learning and scholarship may still be possible.

Allen Tate's contributions to this journal in the years 1926-1927 are noted in a handsome new book of letters, *The Literary Correspondence of Donald Davidson and Allen Tate*, published by the University of Georgia Press ($15). Here is a fascinating series of exchanges between two Southern writers; most of the letters are from the years of *The Fugitive*, 1922-5, and the years of *I'll Take My Stand* to the end of the Agrarian movement in 1942.

In those years Tate wrote that he had "haughtily quit working" (October 1925) for *TNR* because the literary editor Philip Littell had resigned and he failed to get along with the new editor, Robert Morss Lovett. But in April 1926 he was back, writing about T. S. Eliot's *Collected Poems* (*TNR*, June 30, 1926), determined that the review should be "the best I can make it. Therefore it goes slowly—fifty to a hundred

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words a day!" Davidson, whose defensiveness on Southern matters was stronger, grew livid (May 1927) on "reading Bruce Bliven" in *TNR*, was even angrier at Edmund Wilson's piece in these pages (July 29, 1931) on "Tennessee Agrarians." Wilson was considered by the Agrarians to hold dangerous "politico-economic" views of the world, to be a compound of "well-bred Princeton plus a very ill-bred & swanky YMCA-ism." To this angry letter, we have no record that Allen Tate, gentleman and scholarly critic, made any response.

Robert Lowell has written that in his months on Tate's lawn, Tate seemed "jaunty and magisterial," that his poetry gave Lowell the impression that "poetry must be burly, must be courteous, must be tinkered with and recast until one's eyes pop out of one's head." Tate, or the little I saw of Tate last week, seemed old but still jaunty and magisterial. It was, to return to where I started in this piece, a civilizing and humanizing two days.

Correspondence

On Perfecting Big Business

Sirs:

Prof. Galbraith in his "Perfecting the Corporation" (*TNR*, Nov. 2) unfortunately cannot seem to imagine an economic arrangement without the corporation, controlled and directed for the public weal, of course. He appears to accept the premise "that if large tasks are to be performed, large organizations are necessary." This assumption may serve well the professor whose writings describe and chastise the large corporation, but it implies an acceptance of economic growth, albeit controlled, which we may no longer be able to sustain. Prof. Galbraith insists that growth in one industry must be related to growth in related industries. In other words we must plan our expansion.

I would like to call attention again to an alternative economic vision, that of E. F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered*, reviewed in *TNR*, June 15, by Peter Barnes. Schumacher insists that there is wisdom in smallness if only because of the "patchiness of human knowledge, which relies on experiment far more than on understanding."

E. Milton McDonald
Buies Creek, NC

Sirs:

I am surprised that Prof. Galbraith wants to go to all the bother of socializing major American corporations. His entirely worthwhile objectives can be achieved so much more easily simply by passing a law requiring private corporations with certain characteristics to have boards of directors such as he describes.

The only supposed advantage that I can see from his socialization scheme is that the government, rather than private individuals, would get the capital gains from the stock ownership. But over the years mature companies as a group have not provided investors much in the way of capital gains. The Rockefellers are rich, not because the old man bought oil stocks, but because he started the oil companies.

Socialization has two very important drawbacks. First there is evidence that these corporations, once socialized, would be even less responsive to the public than now. The adversary relationship between General Motors and Washington would be replaced by a clubby relationship such as characterizes Albany and the New York Port Authority.

Furthermore the management of these socialized corporations could obtain vast, untrammeled power within government, just as Robert Moses did in the state of New York. In a word I am much more comfortable having the president of General Motors outside the government than in it.

Robert W. Wilson
New York City

Help!

Sirs:

The November 9 issue of *TNR* arrived today with your special supplement on "This Fractured Democracy." With a mixture of eager anticipation and quiet desperation, I consumed the essays by Morgenthau, Woodward and Howe, hoping against hope to ingest some antidote for my deepening mood of *angst*. Why this mood? As a middle-aged "activist" and a professor at Kent State University, I feel like a witness to a shipwreck who happens also to be a passenger on the sinking vessel. Consider the "head-count" of casualties strewn about me:

Today the eight national guardsmen were acquitted of the charges that they had "willfully violated the civil rights" of the 13 Kent State University students felled by the 75 rounds fired from their weapons four and one-half years ago. The previous Tuesday, Ohio voters returned to their highest office James Rhodes, the man who placed the guard on campus and then incited them to violence, and whose recent and legally obtained statement of his role in the event was considered by him so politically injurious that he attempted to prevent its publication until after the election, and who refused to debate this and other issues with his opponent, and who refused to make public his campaign contributors, financial records and income tax reports.

Last month Richard Nixon, whose escalation of the war into Cambodia precipitated the unrest that erupted into violent death on our campus, and whose Attorney General effectively postponed for four years a judicial hearing on the event, was pardoned for his "high crimes and misdemeanors," none of which officially included either his conduct of the war or his complicity in the repression of legitimate dissent.

Hence the net result for justice is that the only ones made accountable for May 4, 1970 at Kent State University have been the victims: four dead, nine wounded, and thousands of psychological casualties in our student body and in others.

Add to these casualties the thousands of embittered Vietnam veterans, many of them in my classes, who believe themselves to have been duped or conscripted into an illegal, immoral, senseless, unwinnable war in which they saw their buddies killed or dismembered, and in which they themselves were physically or psychologically maimed—all for nought, and who now feel betrayed by their government and their countrymen.

Add to these casualties the thousands of draft evaders, deserters and less-than-honorable dischargees, who have been promised "amnesty" only on the condition that they recant their conscientious action and serve a two-year

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sentence of captive "public service," while "the members of the intellectual and political elite whose judgments on Vietnam proved to be consistently wrong and whose policies were a disaster for the country remain members of the elite in good standing" (Morgenthau).

Add to these casualties the many who have been disillusioned by the contradiction between official rhetoric about "equal justice under the law" and the hard fact that those in highest places, while being accused or found guilty of betraying our trust, have either gone scot-free and prospered or have received most generous sentences. (Thus far the only member of Nixon's inner circle of advisers to go to jail happens to be the only one who, whatever his motives, chose to cooperate and volunteer the truth—John Dean!)

Add to these casualties the thousands of young people who are regularly busted and harshly sentenced and whose privacy is ruthlessly invaded because of their casual usage of non-narcotic but illegal marijuana by a system that condones and encourages truly addictive and harmful drugs.

When all these casualties (and many others could be added if time and space permitted) are totalled, what I witness about me is an entire generation either alienated from and cynical about the "American Dream," or intimidated and made submissively conformist—in either case, a generation gone silent.

Since "misery loves company," I am pleased to find myself in such distinguished company with the authors of your special supplement "confessional." What I need now, however, is someone to tell me not where we've been, but where we're going—*if* we as a nation are going anywhere!

Robert A. Dyal
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Kent State University

Protest Reconsidered

Sirs:

Having spent the '60s and '70s on various campuses and having participated in many antiwar demonstrations, I read with interest Prof. Woodward's "What Became of the 1960s?" (*TNR*, Nov. 9). I suspect that his inability to understand the rise and decline of the protest movement is due to his assumption that the cause of the decline should be closely related to the cause of the rise.

The causes of the rise of the movement seem multiple and complex, and psychological factors are doubtless relevant, if difficult to establish. A compelling correlation that can be established, however, is between the rise of the movement and the arrival at college age of the World War II "baby boom." By the mid '60s there were more youths being trained than could easily be assimilated into desirable jobs (Herbert Moller, "Youth as a Force in the Modern World," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, April 1968). The discontent over this situation coincided with the American involvement in a senseless and brutal war made vivid over TV. It seemed clear that instead of using its resources to prepare a decent place for the emerging work force, the government was determined to turn much of it into cannon fodder.

I presume that the decline was a much simpler phenomenon than the rise. It seemed clear to me at the time that the decline had two causes: 1) fatigue brought on by the ineffectiveness of the protests in changing the government's determination to continue fighting; and 2) the end of the draft. There were not many protesters who were politicized enough to continue the struggle after that without an increased level of provocation from the government. Those protesters who had hopes for a job went back to their books, and those who had lost hope of a job went to the communes. I greatly admired Jane Fonda, who continued to protest!

Frank N. Egerton III
Racine, Wisc.

Food Price Facts

Sirs:

We agree wholeheartedly with your October 12 editorial that the current food price predicament is difficult to explain because "almost nothing in our economy is as complex as the pricing of food." Your attempts to unravel this dilemma, however, may have left some misconceptions with your readers.

You cite, for instance, a 1972 Federal Trade Commission study to support your contention regarding "inflationary effects of concentrated market power" in the food industry. Your readers, however, were not informed that this FTC staff study has been repudiated by the commission on the grounds that it is "very imprecise . . . highly speculative and theoretical." You also failed to mention that the FTC cautioned, in regard to this study, that, "it is in no way appropriate to conclude from this material that any or all of the indicated consumer savings could actually be obtained."

You also presented only half of the facts when you reported that first quarter 1974 supermarket profits had in-

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creased over 50 percent above the previous year. You did not mention that this seemingly enormous increase was due to the fact that retail profit margins struggled back up to 1.2 percent on sales after a tailspin that took them down to eight-tenths of one percent—hardly the kind of profiteering your editorial implies.

Finally you quote Department of Agriculture statements that between 1952 and 1971 the majority of the rise in food prices resulted from increased "marketing margins" of the middleman. Once again your statistics are correct, but totally misleading. It is important to understand that "marketing margin" is not the same as profit margin. "Marketing margin" represents the costs necessary to bring food from the farm to the consumer. The source of your statistic, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), explains increases in the marketing bill as the result of population growth, changes in per capita consumption, the use of more highly prepared foods and the rising costs of inputs such as labor, transportation, taxes and packaging materials. Your statistic does not seem so shocking when one realizes that, of course, the amount spent for marketing will increase as the amount marketed increases and as input costs increase.

There are also a series of facts which were omitted from your editorial:

- ► According to USDA in the 1967 to 1973 period when food prices increased 41 percent, food industry profit margins *decreased* 20 percent.
- ► According to USDA the middleman's share of the food dollar has *decreased* 18 percent since 1967.
- ► According to the Federal Trade Commission food processor profits as a percent of stockholder equity are only three-quarters the size of the average profit for all manufacturing industries.

George W. Koch
President
Grocery Manufacturers of America

In reply:

We quote Treasury Secretary Simon's October 31 speech to the National Press Club: "It greatly concerns me that farm prices have declined nine percent while consumer food prices have gone up six percent." Don Paarlberg, the USDA's top economist, said the same day that prices paid farmers are down seven percent from a year ago, while retail prices are up 11 percent. Whatever the figures—they vary depending on the base period used—the fact of larger middleman margins is incontrovertible. Of course not all of this is profit, but a good part of it is—especially in product areas where a few firms dominate the market. And some of the higher "costs" involved—*e.g.*, for advertising and packaging—are incurred mainly to boost profits, not to benefit consumers. (Farmers, by the way, have higher costs too, but their share of the food dollar is going down because they lack the market power that middlemen have.)

Supermarket profits can be reckoned as a percent of sales or as a percent of stockholders' equity. Supermarkets prefer the former for public relations purposes; we think the latter is equally informative. In the first quarter of 1974 supermarket profits were 10.6 percent of the stockholders' equity. That was below the average for all industry, but many individual chains did better and profits for the entire year will probably be higher. Food processors' profits for the first quarter were 14.2 percent of stockholders' equity, slightly above the average for all industries.

The FTC staff is made up of professional economists; the commission itself is a political body subject to pressures from industry. So take your pick. No economist that we know denies that concentrated market power in the food industry has contributed to higher prices; indeed many believe the FTC staff report understates the degree of overcharge. Attorney General Saxbe must be of like mind, since he's launched an antitrust investigation into several food lines.

The Editors

A "Metaphysical" Review

Sirs:

Having just read Chomsky's book on the Middle East, Theodore Draper's review (*TNR*, Oct. 26) is best described by British philosopher F. H. Bradley's definition of "metaphysics"—"the finding of bad reasons for that which we believe upon instinct."

Edward S. Herman
Philadelphia, Pa.

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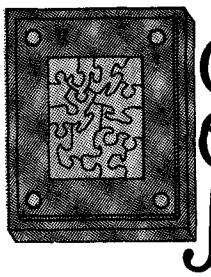

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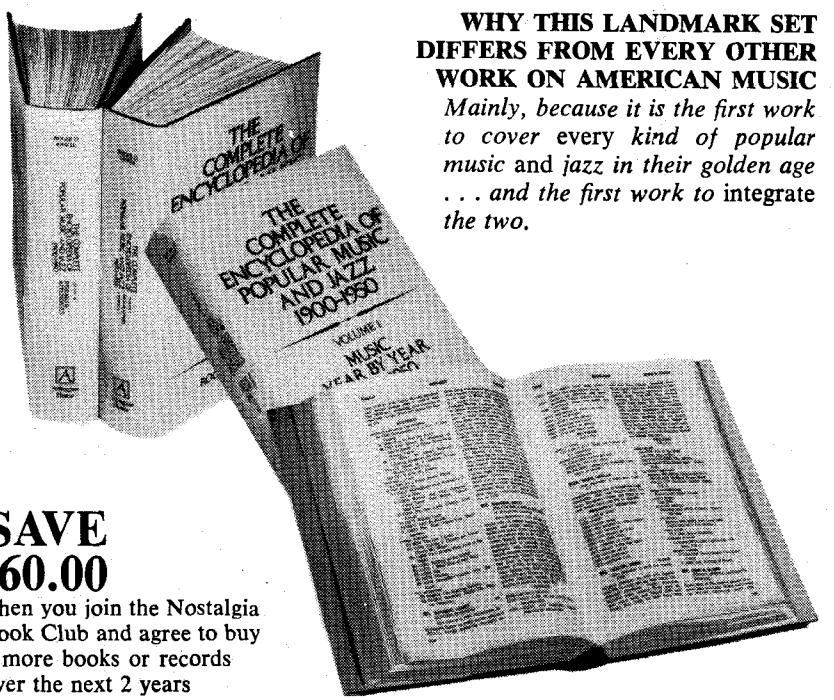

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